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VOL. XIX, No. 8 AUGUST, 1940

THE COMMUNIST

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REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Shifts and Changes in the Imperialist Camp. The Defeat of France and Its Consequences. Party Alignments and Class Alignments. Two Paths of Imperialist Policy. Sharpening American Relations With Germany and Japan. Present Orientations of Most Reactionary Wall Street Circles. Fighting the Imperialist War and Against a "Peace" of Violence and Oppression. Leaders of American Federation of Labor Attack the Third Party Movement. Whom Are They Serving? Further Progress to Labor's Political Independence or Retrogression to Servility to Wall Street. On Launching a Third Party and Defining Its Immediate Electoral Objectives. For a Common Political Basis and a United Working Class Position. An Initiative by Soviet Trade Unions. How the Soviet Union Settled Peacefully an Important Dispute. The French Communists on the Future of France. Role of the American People.

THE disposition of forces in the imperialist camp of the United States is in a process of adjustment. Shifts and changes are still taking place in the camp of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the final alignments, even from the point of view of the forthcoming national elections, have not yet settled themselves. We are witnessing an unprecedented state of instability.

One becomes acutely aware of this fact the moment one tries to fix definitely the respective positions of the Republican and Democratic Parties; that is, the *special* part and role which each of them will be called upon to play in the promotion of the class aims of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the present world situation. The question here is *not* whose class aims these parties will serve and are serving. This is very clear. Both of them will serve and are serving the interests of the exploiters and enemies of the people. And no one in the anti-imperialist camp of the working class and its allies can afford to make a mistake on this score.

The question raised here is a different one. Exactly how are these two parties going to divide their job? Which one of them is proving and will prove the particular weapon of the *most reactionary* circles of finance capital, of Wall Street? It is in the search for an answer to these questions that one meets with a condition that is still in flux, a condition that has become particularly pronounced since the defeat of France, the possibility of a defeat of England and the consequent new situation in which American imperialism finds itself.

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What is this new situation? It is that German imperialism is becoming *more* dangerous and *more* menacing to American imperialism than British imperialism, and that European affairs are assuming an importance for American imperialist policy almost equal to those in the Western Hemisphere and in the Far East. In other words, an objective situation is crystallizing itself wherein the imperialist policies of the American bourgeoisie can make little headway in any one of these regions without the United States actively intervening in all of them. This is a new situation in the making. And it has given rise to a *process* of shifts and changes in the imperialist camp and to various *trends* of imperialist policy.

It is safe to assume that American imperialist policy will on the whole be powerfully conditioned by the fundamental fact that German imperialism is becoming a more dangerous rival of the imperialist bourgeoisie of the United States than Britain; that, consequently, American imperialism will progressively and more actively intervene in European affairs as well as in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere and of the Pacific; that we will confront a more definite development towards what might be called a "higher" and more mature phase of American imperialist policy, resulting from the ever-deepening crisis of the capitalist system and from the recent shifts in the balance of imperialist power on the world arena.

A good inkling of this development is given by the exchange of notes and opinions between the German and American Governments on the "meaning" of the Monroe Doctrine. This is no academic discussion, as everyone can see. Secretary Hull's statement of July 5 clearly discloses two facts: One is that the German Government definitely challenges the right of the American Government to intervene in European affairs; the other is that the American Government reasserts just as definitely its right and intention to intervene. And although President Roosevelt's subsequent "clarification" of the matter from Hyde Park (July 6) tends to blur somewhat Secretary Hull's sharp position, the essence of the American attitude appears to remain unchanged. We thus find expressed in a diplomatic encounter the *first phases* of a most serious conflict between German and American imperialisms on the redivision of the world, not alone on European affairs but on the affairs of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific as well. The almost simultaneous sharpening of relations between American and Japanese imperialisms, also on the question of the Monroe Doctrine, tends to confirm the opinion that American imperialism can no longer move in any one region of the world without intervening (one way or another) in all of them. The *imperialist* logic of the Monroe Doctrine as applied in the *present* world situation calls necessarily for active intervention in the affairs of Europe and the Far East *more than ever before.*

The imperialist bourgeoisie of the

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United States is tending in the direction of precisely this conclusion. But it has not yet made it fully and finally. It is going and will continue to go that way. Of this there can be no doubt. Prior to the defeat of France and the new position of England, the prevailing attitude of considerable sections of the bourgeoisie in this country was one of reluctance to active intervention in Europe, even of opposition. It was mostly Wall Street, its most reactionary element, that was primarily responsible for urging "aid" to the Allies, and not only short of war but including war. In doing so, these most reactionary circles of finance capital were motivated not so much by the broad class interests of the American bourgeoisie as by their own more special and narrow clique interests of *war profiteers,* and also by the expectation that America's joining the war "in support" of the Allies would enable them to extend and solidify their own reactionary dictatorship within the United States. This was, broadly speaking, the line-up of forces in the imperialist camp until the defeat of France and the new condition of England, with the two capitalist parties both trying to serve the Wall Street warmongers, although within the Republican Party the trend of reluctance and opposition to active intervention in Europe *was more pronounced* than in the Democratic Party.

Now, however, we are witnessing the *beginnings* of shifts and new trends in the imperialist camp. Motivated by the same narrow and selfish clique interests as previously, the most reactionary circles of Wall Street (finance capital) are tending in the direction of accepting and making peace with the "new order in Europe" which German imperialism proposes to establish, and perhaps also with the "new order in Asia" which Japanese imperialism proposes to organize. In other words, Wall Street's warmongers are tending to become "appeasers." And we repeat: They haven't become that yet; they are moving in that direction. This was the trend and spirit of Herbert Hoover's policy speech at the Republican nominating convention in Philadelphia: reactionary dictatorship at home, appeasement of German and Japanese imperialisms abroad, and, of course, an active, aggressive and militant policy against the Soviet Union and against all liberation movements of the peoples everywhere.

In other words, Chamberlain's Munichism adapted to the new world situation and to the needs of the most reactionary circles of American finance capital—this is the direction in which Wall Street's war profiteers are moving.

At the same time, shifts and new trends (also beginnings) are observable in other sections of the bourgeoisie. Those who until lately (the defeat of France and its consequences) were reluctant and even opposed to active American intervention in Europe, moved by the imperialist interests of the capitalist class as a whole and by the logic of the Monroe Doctrine in the new situation, are mitigating their opposition and shedding their reluc-

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tance. They are visibly moving in the direction of *more* active intervention in European affairs. And we repeat: they haven't yet reached that position in full force; they are on their way.

These movements and shifts in the imperialist camp are partly obscured by the fact that the entire situation is so unstable and transitional. Furthermore, it would seem that for the *moment* the movement of the most reactionary circles of Wall Street from warmongering to appeasement is *crossing the path* of those sections of the bourgeoisie who are moving—from reluctance to active intervention in Europe—to support for such intervention. And as they cross each other's path, they mingle and tend to rest a while. This is what seems to be happening now. And this is also the reason why the Republican nominating convention, while demonstrating clearly that it was dominated by Wall Street, yet failed to indicate with sufficient clarity *which of the two imperialist paths* it proposes to take—the path of appeasement or the one of more active intervention. But despite all the political and party obscurity still surrounding the foregoing shifts and changes in the imperialist camp, the process itself of shifts in class and group relationships is real and of the greatest importance for the policies and tactics of the anti-imperialist forces of the people.

Remembering also that *party* realignments usually lag somewhat behind *class and group* realignments, it is quite possible that the Democratic nominating convention (to be held shortly, as this is written), while clearly demonstrating its class imperialist character, yet may fail to indicate completely which imperialist path it will take. Similarly to the Republican Party, the Democratic Party too may choose to bide its time on the issues of appeasement or more active intervention, fixing up some temporary and transitional compromise. But this transitional and "compromise" condition will not endure for long. It couldn't in the present swiftly moving and sharpening world situation.

While it is still impossible to say with any degree of certainty that the Republican Party will become definitely the party of appeasement and that the Democratic Party will definitely occupy in the imperialist camp the position of more active intervention; and while it is still harder to say now whether such party realignment and crystallization will reach full completeness during the forthcoming elections and before the vote is actually cast; nevertheless certain political and party trends are already visible. And from these it is safe to deduce that, as the shifts in the imperialist camp become more complete and settled, there is greater *likelihood* for the Republican Party to become definitely the party of appeasement than there is for the Democratic Party, although both may for a while orientate in varying degrees on a compromise between appeasement and more active intervention.

The anti-imperialist peace forces of the American people have to draw certain practical conclusions

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from these newer and more recent developments on the world arena and in the country. The conclusions would seem to be these:

First, the main trend of American imperialist policy moves in the direction of more active intervention in the affairs of Europe as well as in those of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific; that the imperialist realization and "defense" of the Monroe Doctrine spells inevitably in the present world situation aggressive and militant imperialism in nearly all parts of the world. And this is the true meaning of the gigantic militarization and war preparations carried through now by the Government appropriations and authorizations for these purposes already amounting to more than fourteen billion dollars.

In consequence, the danger of being drawn into the war is increasing and so are the terrific burdens of paying for these war preparations which the ruling class is steadily shifting to the backs of the masses of the people. Internal reaction continues to grow and with it the systematic undermining of the civil rights and liberties of the masses. It is clear, therefore, that *much greater efforts than heretofore* are now required for the building and consolidation of the anti-imperialist people's front under working class leadership. The struggle must be broadened and intensified manifold to keep America out of the imperialist war, to expose systematically the imperialist policies of the Roosevelt Administration, to make the rich pay for the burdens of the crisis and war preparations, to protect the rights and standards of the people, to win and organize them on a program of *anti-imperialist* national defense, on a program which will free the country from the economic and political domination of Wall Street.

Second, the most reactionary circles of finance capital, the worst enemies of the working class, and of the American people generally, are feeding and promoting political tendencies which, if unresisted, may prove a most serious menace to the social and national security of the American people. These are the tendencies of "appeasing" German imperialism and Japanese imperialism at the expense of the freedom and national independence of many of the peoples of Europe, Asia and the Americas. These are the tendencies which are rushing this country into an internal regime of reactionary war dictatorship which would differ little, if any, from the present internal regimes of Germany, England or France. These are the same *class tendencies and forces* which have led France to national disaster and which are preparing a similar fate, unless checked and frustrated, for the peoples of England and also of Germany. These are finally the tendencies which would recklessly exploit the resources and power of the United States, selling out the interests of the country itself, to help crush revolutionary liberation movements everywhere and—most particularly—to stimulate all sorts of capitalist conspiracies against the security, well being and progress of the socialist Soviet Union.

It follows, therefore, that the

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forces of the anti-imperialist people's front must watch closely the trends and developments emanating from these most reactionary circles of finance capital—the fountain head of "appeasement," national treason, unbridled reaction and merciless war against the American people itself and its progressive movements. It follows, furthermore, that the anti-imperialist movements have to concentrate their efforts *to combat and defeat* the criminal machinations of these Wall Street circles; and to do so in the very same process of struggle to keep America out of imperialist war, to expose the imperialist policies of the Roosevelt Administration and the imperialist character of its so-called "national" defense program; to do so in the very process of struggle for an anti-imperialist people's program of true defense of the nation. It follows, finally, that the anti-imperialist movements of the United States have to rally the widest active support for a true people's peace, against the so-called "peace" of violence and oppression so dear to the hearts of the imperialist appeasers, for bold and consistent support to the peace policies of the great Soviet Union, for collaboration with and active support to the people's peace and anti-imperialist movements in all parts of the world.

* * *

IN A recent broadside directed against the movements for a people's peace party—third party—the leadership of the American Federation of Labor has again affirmed its attachment and servility to the imperialist bourgeoisie and its two major parties. This was made clear in a statement by the A. F. of L. publicity director, Phillip Pearl (July 3).

The statement says:

"The American Federation of Labor is not taking sides in the Presidential election. It does not believe America has anything to fear if either the Democratic or the Republican candidate wins. But it will certainly have nothing to do with a third party, because it regards such a movement as inimical to the best interests of our country."

First about the question of "taking sides." Assuming that the policy embodied in the statement of Mr. Pearl will actually be the official policy of the leadership of the A. F. of L., will that mean that they are not taking sides in the Presidential elections? No, it will not mean that at all. It will only mean that they will take no sides as between the two *capitalist* candidates, and that—only formally; because, *in practice, Hutcheson & Co. will* work for Willkie the Republican while Tobin and his friends will work for the Democrat whoever he may turn out to be, possibly Roosevelt. Thus, the policy of "not taking sides" resolves itself at once into a policy of granting a free hand to the agents of the two capitalist parties in the A. F. of L. to work freely for their patrons; that is, to split labor's ranks politically and to deliver them in pieces to the parties of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Which is in the "best" tradition of

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the reactionary leadership of the A. F. of L.

But how can one call this treachery against the working class a policy of "not taking sides"? It is decidedly a policy of taking sides *with* the capitalists and *against* the workers.

The excuse for this treachery and crime is that the A. F. of L. leadership "does not believe," according to Pearl, that "America has anything to fear if either the Democratic or the Republican candidate wins." Well, it all depends on who you mean by America. If you mean, as labor leaders should, the true America of the workers and all common people, then this America has *everything* to fear from a capitalist victory in the elections, whichever party wins, and must be prepared to defend itself in the months to come. And this will remain true regardless of whether or not the American people will have grounds to fear the victory of one capitalist party *more* than that of the other.

On the other hand, if by America is meant the imperialist bourgeoisie and Wall Street—and this is the America that the A. F. of L. leadership seems to be concerned with—then it would be true in a certain sense that America has nothing "to fear" from either a Republican or Democratic victory. But only in a certain broad sense of capitalist class interest *as against* the interests of the working class and the bulk of the people. When it comes, however, to the differing and conflicting group interests within the imperialist bourgeoisie itself, then the theory of "nothing to fear from either side" is not true even among the capitalists. And everyday facts of our political life show very convincingly that this is so.

Even though the two major parties are capitalist parties in their class essence and function; and even though the dominating forces of these two parties are influenced and controlled in varying degrees by capitalist interests; yet the different capitalist groups always seek to extract all sorts of guarantees, tangible and practical ones, and are trying to make doubly and triply sure that the candidate and party which they choose to support in a particular election should really serve their respective special group interests.

Yet, in the face of these facts, the "labor" leaders of the A. F. of L., whose position commits them to the defense of the interests of the working class as against the capitalist class, *which means against the political and governing instruments of that class*, "innocently" offer unconditional, absolute and complete endorsement to the Republican and Democratic Parties. If this is not treason to labor and its allies, what is? Idiocy and sheer incompetence, of which there is plenty in this "leadership," will not, however, change the essentially treasonable nature of such political conduct.

Now, let us examine the attack on the movement for a third party. "Such a movement," says the A. F. of L. leadership, is "inimical to the best interests of our country." Why? Why should a movement of the people, led by labor, consolidated

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into a party for effective political action, be regarded "as inimical to the best interests of our country," if by the country is meant the people and not their exploiters? This is a question which the A. F. of L. "leadership" will have to answer, and more convincingly than they have done so far.

But we must also look into some of the details of the attack. The broadside is delivered against the movement *itself;* mind you, not against any particular action or policy which the third party movements might choose to adopt for the forthcoming national elections, but against the very idea of bringing together all the anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist forces of the people and of consolidating them into a political party. It is an attack, in other words, against the movements for labor's political independence, against independent political action by the working class in alliance with all common people, against labor's initiative and leadership in such an alliance. It is an attack against labor's progress to influence the leadership in the nation, being an attempt *to drag labor back to the former position of subordination and servility to Wall Street and its political agents.*

That it is *this* kind of an attack and not just an anticipation of disagreements on some phases of practical policy which a third party might adopt for the coming elections can be seen from the following "arguments" in Mr. Pearl's statement:

"What chance would a third party have this year? Do Mr. Lewis and Senator Wheeler think they can prey on the timidity, credulity and cupidity of enough American voters to win? Do they think that offers of fabulous pensions to the aged, promises of imaginary jobs to the unemployed, and pledges of illusory benefits to the Negroes can elect them to office?"

Mr. Lewis and Senator Wheeler can speak for themselves, of course. But there is more involved here than just a personal attack on these men. It is labor's progress to independence and leadership. And what do Wall Street's labor lieutenants have to say on that? That a third party has no chances this year. If by this is meant the opportunity to elect this year a President and a majority of the House of Congress, that is, to win control of the Federal Government, it is true. And for many reasons; one of them being the continuing domination of the A. F. of L. by the Green-Hutcheson-Woll leadership and the consequent disunity in the ranks of labor. But proceeding from the fact that a third party couldn't, for whatever reasons, win control of the government this year, what of it? An honest conclusion from such a belief would be that a third party couldn't reasonably place before itself such a task for the 1940 elections; that it would have to define its immediate and practical tasks in a more limited and partial way. But it does *not* follow, honestly speaking, that a third party *as such* would be "inimical" to the interests of the people.

The trouble, however, is that the whole Pearl arguments isn't above-

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board. He attacks the appeal which a third party would make to the masses—a third party of labor and all common people—as *preying upon* "the timidity, cupidity and credulity" of the voters; while in the same breath he gives complete and unconditional endorsement to the patent swindles and demagogy of the Republican and Democratic Parties, the parties of the exploiters of the people. He attacks an anticipated program of a people's party, which would undoubtedly call (as does the C.I.O. Legislative Program) for old-age pensions, jobs for the unemployed and equal rights for the Negroes, as "fabulous," "imaginary" and "illusory"; while in the same breath he accepts without comment or qualification the "promises" to the people on the same issues as they come from the parties of Wall Street. How can one reasonably argue with this kind of a position? The only thing to do is *to expose it* for what it is: service for Wall Street and the monopolies; treachery to the working class and the people.

We repeat therefore: the attack is not against this or the other program, or one or another practical policy, which a party of the people, led by labor, might properly adopt to serve the interests of the masses. No. It is not an expression of legitimate disagreements in the family of labor on practical questions of policy and tactics. It is an attack from the outside, *from the enemy class*, carried through by the agents of the enemy in the camp of labor and its allies. It is an attack by the imperialist bourgeoisie upon labor's progress to influence and leadership in the affairs of the nation. And this is, in essence, the function of the leaders of Social-Democracy and social reformism of whatever brand or shape.

Very revealing of the treacherous nature of the reactionary A. F. of L. leadership is Pearl's "charge" that the whole movement for a third party might be nothing else but a trick to defeat the Democratic Party in 1940, and that "certain Republican interests may be inclined to help." Having no inside track to "Republican interests" of any kind, as Mr. Pearl may have, we cannot now effectively discuss this particular "angle" of the question. But we must discuss its broader and really relevant angles. And what are these?

First, why should the A. F. of L. leadership, as speaking through Pearl's statement, be concerned in any way with the effect that a third party ticket might have on the fortunes of either the Democratic or Republican Parties? Haven't they just said, in the same statement, that "the American Federation of Labor is not taking sides in the Presidential elections" and that "it does not believe America has anything to fear if either the Democratic or the Republican candidate wins"? Haven't they just said that? And if they meant it, then why should they in the very same breath be worrying about which of the two is going to win? Why should they all of a sudden become concerned with the possibility that a third party Presidential ticket might defeat the Democratic candidate?

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Isn't it all the same if you really mean what you said that it doesn't matter which of the two wins?

Whatever the answer to these questions, Mr. Pearl has revealed by his "charge" a degree of duplicity and dishonesty of "argument" which a more skilful publicity man for the A. F. of L. would have managed to hide. But it is better that it comes out. It gives the measure of the whole statement and position of the A. F. of L. It shows that the "arguments" do not matter as long as they promise to compromise and hurt the movement for a people's anti-imperialist peace party headed by labor.

And again: in the true family of labor and its allies, legitimate and honest differences of opinion are possible. These should be ironed out and discussed *to reach a common front against the class enemy: Wall Street, the monopolists, the imperialists and war-makers.* In such a fraternal discussion, there is a legitimate point of view (though not necessarily a correct one) that, while labor and its allies have everything to fear from both capitalist parties, a victory of one of them in the forthcoming elections would be more menacing to the people than the victory of the other. There is such a feeling among sections of the labor movement. We refer here specifically to those who prefer a Democratic victory with President Roosevelt as a "lesser evil" to a Republican victory with Willkie. On the part of these wide circles in the labor movement, this opinion is held honestly, motivated by the interests of the people as the adherents of this point of view understand them. Although—and this is a very important point—Democratic Party politicians and their agents in the labor movement are exploiting these political tendencies *in the class interests of the bourgeoisie.*

Can this point of view be dismissed or ignored? Of course, not. It has to be argued and discussed in the family of labor and its allies, *but only on one basis.* On the basis of the class interests of labor and its allies and in opposition to the class interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, Wall Street, and its two parties. This means on the basis of labor's political independence from the two capitalist parties—*an independent political line of the working class,* collaborating with and leading all the common people: the working farmers, the Negroes, the youth. In other words, on the basis of building and consolidating an anti-imperialist people's peace front, headed by labor.

From this common working class basis, the question of consolidating the people's front movement into a political party (third party), to enter the forthcoming elections, should present no special political difficulties. For whatever the practical successes registered by such a party in 1940, they could clearly benefit the people *at once,* opening up great *possibilities* for the months and years to come following the elections. Organizational and technical questions there would be plenty but hardly of a character that could not be surmounted. Thus, on the main problem of consolidat-

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ing the people's forces headed by labor into a political party, to participate in the coming elections, there does not seem to be ground for serious differences in the labor movement, once the common basis is accepted: the imperative need of promoting *further* the progress of labor to influence and leadership in the affairs of the nation.

The mere decision for launching such a party would not, of course, solve all problems. This party would also have to decide, on the basis of its general program and policy, *the specific practical objectives to be attained in the particular elections of 1940,* the main aim being to unite the political army of the anti-imperialist front on an independent line of action. Here, on the specific practical objectives in the forthcoming elections, there can conceivably be a variety of opinions. But what of it? Such a variety of opinions on practical questions of immediate electoral objectives could be ironed out in a democratic way and a common solution arrived at.

In doing so, there can be little doubt that a People's Congress, called upon to consolidate the anti-imperialist peace forces and to launch them into a party, would be guided in its tactics by the following considerations: That in the major struggle to keep America out of war and to protect the standards and rights of the people, the imperialist policies of the Roosevelt Administration have to be fully exposed and that concentrated efforts must be made to combat and frustrate the criminal machinations of the most reactionary circles of Wall Street who orientate on "appeasing" German and Japanese imperialisms *at the expense of the peoples of Europe, Asia and the Americas;* who are driving for a reactionary dictatorship of monopoly capital in the United States and who are pressing for militant aggression against the liberation movements of the masses everywhere and, especially, against the socialist Soviet Union.

The Communist Party of the United States, despite all efforts of capitalist reaction and of government agencies to obstruct its work —efforts made in gross violation of every provision of the Bill of Rights—the Communist Party will fight to the best of its abilities as the vanguard party of the American proletariat. With its own candidates, Browder and Ford, and with its own platform, the Communist Party will fight in the election campaign for the common aims of labor and its allies, for their unity and political consolidation on an independent anti-imperialist line, for the further progress of American labor to influence and leadership in the nation.

* * *

THE Central Trade Union Council of the Soviet Union has demonstrated a splendid initiative and farsightedness by presenting to the government of the Land of Socialism certain proposals for increasing the economic and defensive powers of the country. Specifically, the proposals are for "the lengthening of the working day up to eight hours, the change from a six-

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day to a seven-day week, and the prohibition of unauthorized quitting of enterprises and institutions by workers and employees." These proposals, which the Government has approved, have been since enthusiastically endorsed by the workers and employees of the socialist state.

This is the working out of national defense in a socialist country, owned by the people and ruled by the people, a country following a socialist peace policy which serves and benefits the working people all over the world. In the Soviet Union, therefore, national defense means in practice as well as in name exactly what the words stand for—*defense of the nation*—and not of the selfish privileges of a clique of exploiters and imperialists. But it means much more than that. It is defense of socialism—the salvation and future of mankind. It is the strengthening of that power in the world around which the working people everywhere are bound to rally in ever larger numbers; because this is the Land of Socialism, the only state which champions the cause of peace among nations and which defends the vital interests of the toiling people of all countries.

Important is also the motivation given by the Central Trade Union Council for its proposals. It proceeds from the fact that "the capitalist world again is shaken by a world war" and that by the universal militarization of their economies "the imperialist states have tremendously increased production of all armaments." It then correctly concludes that "thus the war danger for our country has grown, the international situation has become fraught with surprises." Therefore: "in this situation our country, true to its policy of peace, is bound in the interests of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. to raise still further its defensive and economic power."

Because of its growing might and steadfast prosecution of its socialist peace policy, the Soviet Union remained and is remaining outside the war which is tearing the capitalist world asunder. But the unfoldment of this war is creating dangers for the socialist state, the danger of all kinds of "surprises." Hence the need for raising its economic and defensive power.

Pursuing its policy of peace in this sort of world situation, the Soviet Union has also been striving to liquidate disputable issues which may give rise to dangerous conflicts. An example of this is the Rumanian-Soviet agreement by which Bessarabia is restored and the northern part of Bukovina transferred to the Soviet Union. And this was accomplished by peaceful methods and a peaceful way. Thus a new life of happiness, peace and prosperity, a life of socialism, has opened up for the peoples of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, for many years brutally oppressed and exploited by the Rumanian landlords and capitalists as well as by the big imperialists of the Western countries.

Equally gratifying for the toiling masses of all countries is the growing friendship and closeness of relations between the Baltic countries and the Soviet Union.

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Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are coming to life in the truest sense of the word. Having freed themselves of so-called governments, which have been conspiring against the well being and peace of their peoples, abusing most shamefully the opportunities for friendship and profitable cooperation extended by the Soviet Union, these Baltic states have now entered a phase of development, full of promise for the happiness and prosperity of their peoples. They will now be able to assure for themselves all the tremendous advantages of genuine and close collaboration with the powerful socialist state. As a result, the prerequisites for peace in the Baltic, as well as for the security of the frontiers of the Soviet Union, have been immeasurably strengthened.

It has been asked many times how it is that the Soviet Union has been able to follow successfully this sort of a foreign policy in the midst of a world imperialist war. The answer lies in the *socialist* nature of the policy itself, in the *socialist* character of the state which pursues that policy, in the relation of world forces, and in the wisdom of the Stalinist leadership.

But perhaps the question answers itself best by a brief reference to those forces upon which the Soviet Union relies in the prosecution of its socialist peace policy. It will be recalled that at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (March, 1939), Comrade Stalin, in his report, stated the matter in substance as follows:

In its foreign policy, the Soviet Union bases itself on its growing economic, political and cultural might; on the moral and political unity of Soviet society; on the friendship between the Soviet peoples; on its Red Army and Fleet; on its peace policy; on the moral support of the toiling masses of all countries; on the common sense of those countries which, for one reason or another, abstain from disturbing the peace.

Therefore: by rallying their forces around the great Land of Socialism, uniting with the rest of the toiling people nationally and internationally, the workers of the capitalist countries will be able to fight most successfully for a people's peace, for freedom and security.

* * *

ADDRESSING the French people on the eve of the disastrous capitulation of the French Government to German imperialism, the Communist Party of France spoke these words:

"The French imperialists, having unleashed war, having brought the people to catastrophe and sent millions of workers and peasants to their doom on the field of battle, are preparing to capitulate behind the backs of the people. France is faced with the danger of disappearing as a nation, as an independent state."

And this is exactly what has come to pass. France is in danger of disappearing as a nation and independent state through the imposition of a "peace" of violence

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and oppression by German and Italian imperialism, administered by the traitorous scoundrels who manage the affairs of the French bourgeoisie. At this moment it is Laval & Co. There will also be others of the same stripe, very likely.

Says the French Communist Party:

"This surrender bespeaks the utter bankruptcy of the French bourgeoisie, of their regime, their corrupt politicians, their incompetent generals. This is the bankruptcy of the imperialist policy of the French bourgeoisie, which provided food for the chauvinistic revenge propaganda of German reaction and facilitated its advent to power."

And the "prominent" personages who prepared and carried through the disaster are the Lavals, Flandins, Bonnets, Daladiers and Blums, who are now scrambling for the privilege of selling out France, wholesale and retail. Here is the fifth column, of which we hear so much nowadays. They are the agents and servants of the imperialist bourgeoisie, for whom nation and country have only one meaning: how much will it bring in terms of money and profit. It is pretty nearly the same with our "own" imperialist bourgeoisie, and particularly with the most reactionary circles of finance capital, those that are already orientating on underwriting a "peace" of violence and oppression as best suited to their selfish, narrow and mercenary clique interests.

Says the French Party further:

"The bourgeoisie has brought our country to the brink of a precipice. Today, when German capitalism is putting into practice its plan of enslaving France, all that the French bourgeoisie is concerned with is to save its privileges, its capital, its class domination. It is ready to sacrifice the independence of our country, to sacrifice the vital interests of our people. It is ready to come to terms with the conqueror, to shelter itself behind German bayonets to escape the reckoning which the indignant people are preparing for it. The bourgeoisie and their 'Socialists' are the real curse of the people. Their regime is one of organized treachery towards our nation."

The "new order" which Laval & Co. are trying now to establish in France is nothing else but a clumsy attempt to legalize this regime of "organized treachery" towards the French nation and people. It is a dastardly attempt to save for the bourgeoisie "their privileges, their capital, their class domination," behind the shelter of German bayonets, at the expense of the French nation and its independence, by the destruction of every right and human standard of the masses.

But the hour of reckoning is coming. Or, in the moving words of the French Communist Party:

"The working class, the people of France, will never be reconciled to foreign enslavement. As ever, under all conditions, so in these days of severe trial, horror and boundless calamities, we Communists remain with our people. Their fate is our fate. We profoundly believe in the strength and future of our people,

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in the future of France. Our people will not perish. Their will and their freedom-loving spirit are not to be shattered by the dark forces of traitors, exploiters, plunderers and conquerors."

Can we help? Of course, we can. As we carry on the fight against the imperialist war and for keeping America out of it, as we expose the imperialist character of the Roosevelt Administration and its policies, we must help bring to effective expression the demand of the American people for a true people's peace, against a so-called "peace" of violence and oppression. The wide masses of this country share fully the profound belief expressed by the French Communist Party "in the strength and future of our people, in the future of France." The masses of the American people have undoubted sympathy for the coming to life of a France free of "traitors, exploiters, plunderers and conquerors." This sympathy has to be made articulate and effective in the great world struggle for *Peace to the Peoples*, in defiance of the treacherous imperialists.

And in doing so, we should lend all possible assistance and support to the efforts of "The American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom" on behalf of the anti-fascist refugees now in French concentration camps. The Committee has called upon the American Government to help secure the release of these heroic fighters against reaction, the extension to them of consular protection and the right of asylum in the United States. Wide and effective mass support is imperatively necessary to bring about tangible results without much delay.

To help these brave refugees is to help ourselves, our own general struggle for peace, security and freedom. A. B.

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NEW FORCES FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE SOUTH

BY ROB FOWLER HALL

THE South is approaching a period of profound historical development. The measures of the reactionary ruling class to thwart the democratic forces, to halt the extension of democracy, to involve this country in imperialist war and to intensify the exploitation of its own people, are inevitably speeding up the development of a powerful movement of the Southern masses for peace, democratic rights and security. Those measures, in spite of their reactionary purpose, and their immediate effect in strengthening reaction, are facilitating the unification of the Negro people and the white toilers, the essential basis for a victorious people's movement in the South.

There have been two such periods of powerful democratic upsurge in the South in the past, both of them notable for the great sweep of the movements, involving at their apex the vast majority of the people and having as their keystone the unity of Negro and white. In both of these periods, as throughout the history of the South, the progressive democratic forces had to contend with a reactionary class whose most effective weapon was the skillful manipulation of the division between Negro and white in the South. Its strategy was as follows: by an ostentatious attack on the Negro people, to conceal its attacks, in fact and deed, on the rights and living standards of both the Negro and white masses. It goes without saying that the Bourbons were never so completely confident of their artful strategy as to give up their other weapon, the use of unlimited terror and force.

This strategy failed when the suffering of the people and the rise of new class forces, breaking through the barriers of prejudice erected and maintained by the ruling classes, established a powerful, fighting unity of Negro and white. This was the basis of the success of the progressive, democratic movements of the people. And it was precisely when this unity was weakened or destroyed that these people's movements were forced to retreat and were subsequently dispersed.

We have said that there were two periods of great popular democratic movements in the South in the past. The first was the anti-slavery movement which developed to a high point through the Civil War, and the ensuing Constitutional

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amendments and the brief period of Reconstruction. The second period of mass democratic movement in the South took the form of the Populist wave covering roughly the last two decades of the past century.

The slave revolts antecedent to the Civil War constitute a glowing record of struggles of a people determined to be free. The heroism of the Negro people and the extent of their inspiring struggles for emancipation are being more fully revealed in Marxist researches now under way. In these revolts the Negro people found allies, not only in John Brown and other Northern Abolitionists, but also among Southern whites. Researches are uncovering one by one, here and there, a native Southern white, an itinerant clock-maker, a saddler or some other craftsman who frequently paid with his life for his aid to the Negro slave revolts. That these individual whites represented a distinct trend in the relation of forces is fully confirmed in the developments which took place during the Civil War.

The First Period

The Civil War, the first phase of the democratic revolution in the South, was a class war, with the relatively few but powerful slaveowners and their supporters confronting the growing manufacturing and merchant classes, the workers and the Western farmers. There was precious little voluntary support for the slaveowners among the poor whites, the free farmers, in the South, many of whom went over actively to the Union cause. Disaffection was widely prevalent, especially in the hill counties, where the plantation system had never made headway. In addition to the well-known "secession" of what is now West Virginia from tidewater Virginia, dominated by the slaveowners, there were many cases of counties in the deep South (Jones in Mississippi, Dade in Georgia, Winston in Alabama) which repudiated the Confederate cause. In the border states of Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee and Maryland, the anti-slavery feeling among the whites (as expressed through the ballot box) was so high that these states could have been strongholds of the Union, had it not been for the hesitancy of the Washington Government due to its "anxiety to keep the 'loyal' slaveholders of the border states in good humor," as Marx said.

Undoubtedly there were large sections of the white population in the South who saw that the Southern oligarchy was not defending "state's rights," but was conducting, as Marx said, "a war of conquest for the extension and perpetuation of slavery." It sought, "not a dissolution of the Union, but a *reorganization* of it, a *reorganization on the basis of slavery,* under the recognized control of the slaveholding oligarchy." (Marx-Engels, *Civil War in the United States,* p. 80, International Publishers, N. Y.)

Even at that time, as Marx pointed out, the Southern ruling class was directing its attacks, not only at the Negro people in the South, but against the white toilers,

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and against them consciously and deliberately. This was revealed in the Confederate Constitution adopted in Montgomery. Marx wrote:

". . . the oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders utilized the Congress of Montgomery not only to proclaim the separation of the South from the North. It exploited it at the same time to revolutionize the internal constitutions of the slave states, to completely subjugate the section of the white population that had still maintained some independence under the protection and the democratic Constitution of the Union. Between 1856 and 1860 the political spokesmen, jurists, moralists and theologians of the slaveholders' party had already sought to prove, not so much that Negro slavery is justified, but rather that color is a matter of indifference and the working class is everywhere born to slavery." (*Ibid.*, p. 79.)

The Montgomery Constitution has been critically analyzed recently by Maury Maverick in his work *Blood and Ink*. In this Mr. Maverick is in a good tradition. Popular sentiment against the Montgomery Constitution was so strong that the slave power did not dare risk its rejection at the hands of the people, and secured its ratification in the several states in carefully hand-picked conventions.

Some of its opponents were outspoken. Thus Roselius, whom Marx called the political veteran of Louisiana, declared before the Louisiana Convention at New Orleans on March 22, 1861:

"The Montgomery Constitution is not a constitution but a conspiracy. It does not inaugurate a government of the people, *but a detestable and unrestricted oligarchy*. The people were not permitted to play any part in this matter. The Convention of Montgomery has dug the grave of political liberty, and now we are summoned to attend its funeral." *(Ibid.)*

Against this background it is not difficult to understand the broad popular movement of the Southern people following the surrender of the slave power at Appomattox.

The task of the Civil War was to create the conditions for the abolition of slavery and the institution of democracy. Chattel slavery was abolished, but democracy was not thereupon automatically handed over to the Southern people on a silver platter. Reconstruction years, from 1865 to 1875, were years of struggle for democracy in the South, with the Negro people and the Southern toilers fighting shoulder to shoulder.

The first issue of Reconstruction was the basis on which the defeated states were to be readmitted to the Union. Lincoln, by the close of the war, had already readmitted Louisiana, Arkansas and Tennessee. Eleven days after Appomattox, Lincoln was assassinated, and was succeeded by Andrew Johnson. For Johnson, the concessions to the former slave power was more than a policy; it was a passion. For the first eight months of his office as President, from April to December, 1865, while Congress was adjourned, Johnson had everything his way. He appointed as pro-

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visional governors to the Southern States men openly partial to the former slavemasters. He pardoned thousands of former rebel officers, who participated in conventions to arrange for the speedy re-entry of their states into the Union. These conventions went through the form of accepting the 13th Amendment as the price for re-entry; but in every other respect their state constitutions were reactionary, full of subterfuge, laying the basis for the hated Black Codes under which Negroes were persecuted and disfranchised.

When Congress convened, the Radical Republicans, led by Thaddeus Stevens, came forward to voice the demands of the common people of the North and South. They annulled Johnson's pardons and refused admission to the Southern States that had not adopted genuinely democratic constitutions. They enacted the Civil Rights Bill in April and the Freedmen's Bureau Bill in July. They adopted the 14th Amendment to prevent denial by the states of the citizens' right to vote.

Congress divided the South into five military districts with Federal troops on hand to cope with the terrorism of the former slavemasters. New conventions were called with troops protecting the right of the Negroes to vote. Meanwhile, Negroes and progressive whites were developing their own protective, revolutionary arm in the Union League clubs and citizens' defense groups.

In September, 1867, 700,000 Negroes became electors when the registration of voters were held. In the various states, Constitutional conventions were held, attended almost entirely by the middle classes and the poor. In Louisiana and South Carolina, a majority of the delegates were Negroes. In the other Southern states, roughly about three-fourths were whites. For example, in Virginia there were eighty white and twenty-five Negro; in Alabama, ninety white and twenty-five Negro; in Georgia, one hundred and thirty-seven white and thirty-three Negro.

Nor were the white delegates predominantly "carpet-baggers" from the North. According to the Alabama *Daily Sentinel* (as quoted by James Allen in *Reconstruction)*, seventy of the ninety white delegates in the Alabama convention were native Southerners. Generally, they were not men of property. Thus, in the South Carolina convention it was found that all the white delegates paid a total of only $761 in annual taxes, and of this amount, $508 was accounted for by one conservative.

Legislatures elected during this period reflected, as indicated by the figures given above, the unity of the Negro people and the white toilers. These legislatures adopted the most progressive legislation the South has even seen. They established, for the first time in the South, free public schools, with the Negro lawmakers most active in their behalf. Progressive also were their tax programs, exempting small farmers and increasing taxes on the large landowners. Civil liberties were guaranteed and the

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rights of women recognized, showing the Negro and poor whites as the true defenders of "Southern white womanhood."

Reaction was defeated; but it was not destroyed. At the first opportunity it emerged, with all of its wiles and all of its terror, to climb back into the saddle. That opportunity was given it by the rupture within the Republican Party. The rising capitalist class which dominated the party nationally had achieved its aim in abolishing chattel slavery and in securing domination in the affairs of the nation. Sensing the threat of the growing working class in the North, it was content to stop short of further reforms. All the more so because the opening of the West, fat government contracts, and free land for railroads provided an alluring prospect to the party in power. The Republican Party split, and democracy in the South was ditched. The new Congress was conciliatory to the planters and, in 1876, the Democrats and the Republicans reached an agreement to forgive and forget.

Counter-revolution was in the saddle, riding down the people with fierce terror. Negro and white leaders of the progressive forces were shot down on the streets. Negroes were driven from the polls at the point of guns. The 14th and 15th Amendments were nullified in the blood of the common people, Negro and white.

What the Bourbons failed to do with terror, they accomplished by fraud, splitting the Negro and white allies. Utilizing the obvious existence of graft, corruption and big business domination of the Republican Party, pitting "agriculture" against "industry," and appealing to a fomented fear of "Negro domination," they were able to divide large sections of the white Southerners from the Republican Party and from the Negroes. Thus ended one of the most stirring chapters in the history of the American battle for freedom and democracy.

The Second Period

After the war, only a handful of the Southern ruling class were unable to reconcile themselves to the abolition of slavery. They continued to look backward to the ante-bellum days when life at least in retrospect seemed sweeter and happier. The majority of them, however, accepted the emancipation of the slaves, worked out the "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the Northern business and banking interests as to the status quo existing after Reconstruction, and immediately got down to the business of making money out of the cheap labor and unrestricted exploitation of the South's natural resources.

The new capitalism of the South was not the young capitalism of the industrial revolution. It was not vigorous, pioneering, progressive. When capitalism came to the South, it was already tainted with the sins of monopoly. Capitalism in the South represented a compromise between the old feudalism and the newer forms of exploitation. The oppression of the small farmers and the middle classes as a whole, and the looting of public treasuries and public lands by the great monopo-

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lies, the railroads, the banks, the big merchants, by Wall Street, was an integral part of the system.

The suppression of the Reconstruction legislatures was accompanied by sharpening oppression of the small farmers, whose conditions became increasingly worse. By 1890, conditions were such that tenants and their families were walking the roads penniless and hungry. Tom Watson, of Georgia, the agrarian leader, was able to say, "The farmer is indeed at the end of his row."

In 1877, the small and middle farmers began to organize in the Farmers' Alliance, beginning in Texas and rapidly expanding through the old South. Three years after the organizers arrived in Georgia, one hundred and thirty-four out of the state's one hundred and thirty-seven counties were organized with more than 100,000 members enrolled.

Starting off as "a white man's organization," the Alliance soon came to realize that the Negro people were an essential ally. By 1890, there were a million white farmers and three-quarters of a million Negroes enrolled.

The People's Party (or the Populists, as the party was called) was the political form through which the Alliance expressed itself. Its program was primarily anti-monopolist. It called for strict control and regulation of the corporations, nationalization of the railroads, cheaper currency, and many other popular reforms.

Primarily a farmers' movement, the Alliance moved toward closer relations with the workers. Addressing himself to the Knights of Labor, a spokesman for the Alliance asked: "Will you . . . help the farmers and laborers in the field of their fight on the common enemy?"

Charged with promoting class legislation, Congressman Watson answered:

"What has this Congress ever had but class legislation? Our statute books are filled with legislation in behalf of capital at the expense of labor. . . . If we must have class legislation as we have always had it and always will have it, what class is more entitled to it than the largest class—the working class?"

The sweep of the Populist movement was tremendous. The old line political machines were humbled in state after state. There was hardly a state legislature in the deep South that did not have its powerful, articulate bloc of Populists crying out the demands of the common people and pointing the accusing finger at the great corporations. In 1892, the movement won many positions away from the Democratic Tories and actually threatened their hegemony. After 1896, this movement was largely dissipated as an organized force, not because the people had lost their hatred of the oppressing corporations, but because its middle-class leadership vacillated and surrendered to the fake liberalism of the so-called "new" Democratic Party which, under Bryan, borrowed liberally from the platform of the Populists.

In the history of Populism there are some glowing chapters on the

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unity of the Negro people and embattled white farmers. There is the story, frequently related, of how Tom Watson organized an army of poor white farmers, armed with shotguns, to protect a Negro Populist organizer from a lynch mob.

But among the middle-class Populist leaders there was no basic understanding of the Negro question. The Negro rights for which they fought were too often simply the right to vote for the Populist candidates. The reactionaries were constantly shouting "Negro domination" and the white farmers were not sufficiently prepared by their middle-class leaders to cope with this question. At the same time, the Populists did not fight energetically enough for Negro rights, with the result that in some states Republicans and Tory Democrats were able to win many Negro votes. In the resulting confusion the reactionaries succeeded in driving a wedge between Negro and white.

This bore its fruit in the reactionary state constitutions adopted around the turn of the century. The poll tax, property and literacy qualifications, the grandfather clause, and other disfranchising tricks were embodied in the state constitutions. As the proceedings of the various constitutional conventions attest in every case, the ruling class spokesmen insisted that these clauses were designed only to prevent the Negro people from voting and would not place obstacles in the way of even the poorest white voter. They were enacted in every Southern state and thus sealed the fate of democracy for both Negroes and whites in the South, for many years.

These restrictions on the right to vote had the support of most of the Populist leaders, including the outstanding Southern Populist, Tom Watson.

Watson's vacillations, and for that matter, the waverings of the Populist movement, were due to the fact that this was a movement led by the middle class. The middle class is not a homogeneous class, but is comprised of all those groups which belong neither to the capitalist class of big exploiters nor to the working class. It is a class with a thousand contradictions and conflicting aims. While it may revolt against the domination of big capital, as it did in the 1890's, it is incapable of consistent leadership and it will always fritter away its energies and land back under the coattails of big capital unless it makes an alliance with and accepts the leadership of the working class. This was impossible in the South in the 1890's, because we had a working class too small numerically and too poorly organized to impress its leadership on the movement of the day; especially so since the working class nationally was not sufficiently organized nor politically conscious to provide such leadership and was generally playing a subordinate role in the popular reform movements of this period.

The Present Situation

Today, in the South, we approach a third period of popular, democratic upsurge. We approach it at a time not only of great suffering

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among the Southern people, but also of imperialist war when every mother's son is threatened with destruction by the war plots of the ruling class. In contrast to such periods in the past, there has emerged in the South an industrial proletariat which is giving leadership to the forces of progress and democracy. It is this which provides the guarantees of unbreakable unity of Negro and white and therefore of victory.

The capitalists have with their own hands created the conditions for this movement. Through their system of brutal exploitation, they have driven the Southern people to a standard of living far below that of other regions. This standard is reflected—although not accurately registered—in per capita income figures recently released by Secretary of Commerce Harry Hopkins. These figures show an annual per capita income for Mississippi as low as $205; for Arkansas, $216; for Alabama, $225; and for Virginia, one of the highest in the South, $347. Figures for Eastern states show a per capita income three and four times that of the Southern states.

In March, 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt, speaking in Gainesville, Ga., said:

"Georgia and the lower South may just as well face facts. The purchasing power of the millions of Americans in this whole area is far too low. Most men and women who work for wages in this whole area get wages which are far too low."

Several months later, in his message to the White House Conference on Southern Problems, the President wrote:

"It is my conviction that the South presents right now the Nation's No. 1 economic problem—the nation's problem, not merely the South's. For we have an economic unbalance in the nation as a whole, due to this very condition of the South."

Such solicitous words could not but awaken hope in the breasts of the Southern workers that the Administration would utilize the Wages-and-Hours Act—in a word, enforce the law—to raise the income level of millions of Southern workers. But such hopes were doomed. With the outbreak of the imperialist war and the beginning of the armed redivision of the world, the New Deal party, like the Republican Party of 1877, made its peace with the Southern ruling class, the terms of the agreement calling for a pledge of non-intervention in the hallowed right of Southern Bourbons to oppress and exploit the Southern masses.

Mr. Roosevelt's Administration is quite willing to forget that the Wages-and-Hours Act was adopted by Congress and is, at least theoretically, the law of the land. Recently it was reported that the Wages-and-Hours Administration so far forgot itself as actually to consider some serious measures towards enforcing the wage-and-hour rates in the Southern lumber industry, the largest single industry in the South. But Congressman Frank Boykin of Mobile, Alabama (who owns thousands of acres of first-rate hardwood in Washington County),

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informed the Wages-and-Hours Administration that such steps would be very unfortunate and that he spoke for one hundred and fifty Southern Congressmen. The administration was impressed by the logic of Mr. Boykin's arguments, and workers in the hazardous industry in the South must continue to work for twenty cents an hour, or less, and at whatever hours Mr. Boykin's friends think necessary.*

The lumber industry is of course largely unorganized. But even in organized industries such as steel and coal, or in a partly organized industry like textile, we find wage rates from 20 to 50 per cent lower than in the North.

The lowest wage rates, however, are reserved for those industries which are predominantly Southern, such as tobacco. A report of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration based on a relief study of the industry at Winston-Salem and Durham, North Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia, stated: "Whatever the size of the family, earnings are insufficient for minimum subsistence." In one branch of the industry, Negro workers averaged $24.62 monthly, while white workers averaged $36.14.

With the recent slashes in W.P.A. rolls, suffering among the unemployed has increased sharply. Southern Bourbons are against relief *in principle,* and appropriations for direct relief, where they exist at all, are woefully inadequate. Old-age assistance is $8 a month in Mississippi and $12 in Alabama.

Let us turn to the farmers. As in 1892, the farmers are at the end of their row. Two years ago, the Report on the Economic Conditions of the South, said:

"Many thousands of the South's farm families are living in poverty comparable to that of the poorest peasants in Europe."

The past two years have seen no improvement in the conditions of small farm owners, tenants, and sharecroppers, despite the much-advertised activities of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and Federal Security Administration. The writer recently talked to a Negro sharecropper a client of F.S.A., who had received a loan of $150 from the government. The authorities had instructed him how to spend the money—in fact, had spent it for him, allocating so much for seed, feed, fertilizer, interest, etc. He was left with the magnificent sum of $33.12 for all the living expenses of his family throughout the year. Strangely, the F.S.A. did not attempt to show him how to feed and clothe his family of seven on this $33.12.

* As timber suitable for lumber is "cut out" in the Gulf coastal plains of Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi, the sawmills close down and are shortly thereafter destroyed by "accidental" fire, usually covered by insurance. This process has gone on for the past twenty years, leaving vast stretches of sandy, stump-dotted lands of indifferent value for agriculture. The development of a process for making paper from pine pulp has provided a new industry in the cut-over lands during the past five years. Paper mills have been established in Mobile, Tuscaloosa, Moss Point, Bogalusa and other places; but the number employed is far less than that formerly employed in the lumber industry in these same areas. Despite the low price paid for the work, many expropriated farmers eke out a meager living cutting logs for the paper mills. During a recent trip to Mississippi, the writer was told by log-cutters that by working twelve to fourteen hours a day, they could make $10 to $12 a week. Only small trees from five to seven inches in diameter are cut thus effectively preventing the regrowth of the Southern pine forests.

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The process of "tractoring off" tenants and farm labor is not confined to the West and Southwest. In the old South, too, Negro and white ex-farmers are trudging the roads looking for work, for a place to sleep, for something to eat.

The imperialist war has not opened up markets for the cotton and tobacco crops of the Southern farmers. On the contrary, the warring powers have embargoed American farm products and diverted their cash into munitions purchases. And as the United States Government steps up its drive for imperialist domination of world markets, it will increase the imports of farm products from abroad in order to sell more fabricated steel and finished products.

All that has been said of the oppression and exploitation of the Southern people as a whole applies to the Negro people—but doubly so. In fact, comparative figures of annual wages for employed workers in one Southern state (excluding agriculture and domestic work) showed an average of $641 for whites and $243 for Negroes, or nearly two-thirds less. Recently a glaring light was thrown on the conditions of the Negro people in two incidents: the Natchez fire in which two hundred Negroes perished, and the savage murder of a Negro steel worker by police officers in a suburban jail on the outskirts of Birmingham. Neither of these incidents is isolated. Both are typical of what is going on in every state and every county in the South, almost daily. They are simply the most brutal expressions of the system which, for the Negro people, stands for poverty, starvation, lynching, and discrimination of every sort.

These are the economic and social conditions of the overwhelming majority of the people in the South. Is it any wonder that the ruling class is afraid of democratic rights for the Southern people? Its fear of the people stands behind the system of poll tax which prevails in eight Southern states, effectively disfranchising 80 per cent of the population, Negro and white. It is this fear which determines the retention of the variety of subterfuges through which the ruling class, in cynical violation of the 14th and 15th Amendments, denies the right to vote to the Negro people almost as a whole.

The suffocation of democracy in the South is not merely the will of the Southern ruling class; it is a valuable instrument of power of the reactionary forces in the nation. The poll tax and other franchise restrictions in the South have provided American imperialism, American finance capital, with a consistent reactionary bloc in the Senate and in the House, ready at a moment's notice to do battle against labor legislation, relief measures, and for the restriction of democracy in the other states.

The situation today, in which the American bourgeoisie is actively attacking civil liberties, and the living standards of the masses, and preparing to drag the nation into imperialist war, offers us a classic illustration of how the Negro question is manipulated by the white

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ruling class against the interests of the Negro people *and the white common people.*

This is stated with full clarity in the resolution on democratic rights in the South adopted at the Eleventh National Convention of the Communist Party:

"The national oppression of the Negro is not simply a survival of slavery; it is largely the result of a deliberate revival and restimulation of the historic traditions of slavery *in the interest of class privilege.*" (*The Communist,* July, 1940, p. 619.)

The Imperialist War and the South

To the already intolerable burdens of the Southern people, the ruling class and its corrupt politicians now propose to add the additional burden of imperialist war. In preparation for this war, and in order to make it simultaneously a war against the Southern people, the former New Dealers and the Garner forces in the Democratic Party have established an idyllic harmony. Old quarrels were forgotten as the Roosevelt forces abandoned the New Deal reforms, and Southern industrialists, such as H. A. Berg of Birmingham's Woodward Iron Co., pledged "100 per cent support" to Roosevelt.

Mayor Maury Maverick of San Antonio, formerly a staunch supporter of John L. Lewis and the C.I.O., journeyed to Chattanooga to attack Lewis and to plump for a third term for Roosevelt before the second Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

Undoubtedly new alignments will take place in the coming months. Southern industrialists and many Southern politicians who saw only Roosevelt as their salvation are now more than favorably inclined toward Wendell Willkie, who is the big boss of the Alabama Power Co., the Tennessee Power Company, the Georgia Power Co., and other Southern subsidiaries of Commonwealth Southern. Behind declarations of support for the Democratic Party there will be a strong undercurrent, in leading Democratic circles, for Willkie.

Regardless of these factors, the Southern ruling class is united in the aim of having the South play a major role in the imperialist war and the war preparations, hoping for a large share of the loot.

The Associated Industries of Alabama have held two secret sessions with representatives of the War Department, it is reported. Governor Rivers of Georgia, who has shown so much zeal in the persecution of the foreign-born (but little enough in persecuting floggers) called a conference of Southern governors to bring more war industries to the South. The Knoxville City Council sent its city manager to Washington to bid for war industries. We can easily guess at the anti-union, anti-labor pledges the Southern place-holders are making to Washington.

The ruling class is confident that it can prevent unionization, squeeze wages lower and, through the restrictions on democratic rights, stifle expression of anti-war sentiment in the South. They base themselves on the relative weakness of the unions in the South, on their

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own "fifth column" in leading positions in many Southern trade unions, and on the cleavage between Negro and white which they have fostered and maintained.

The Democratic Forces in the South

The Southern ruling class will find that it has miscalculated. It is unable to learn or forget. It cannot forget how it crushed the popular movements for democracy in 1875 and 1900; and it has not learned that there are new forces in the South today, forces which cannot be crushed.

We Communists know and recognize these forces.

We have seen the emergence of the Southern industrial proletariat, which must be reckoned in millions, employed in the steel, coal, textile, lumber, paper, marine, railroad, and other basic industries. Hundreds of thousands of them are organized in the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which is a new kind of union. The C.I.O. bases itself on the unity of Negro and white, and on the defense of the interests of both, with democracy in union affairs and with equal rights in the industries. Among the Southern workers there is a readiness to struggle, against tremendous odds, for the interests of themselves and their families, as has been shown in great strikes in the textile, longshore, coal, and iron industries.

Furthermore, the Southern white worker is rapidly learning to put aside the race prejudice which has kept Negro and white divided and to struggle shoulder to shoulder for the joint demands of the Southern people. The Southern workers represent—and the themselves are increasingly recognizing this—the interests, not only of their class, but of all the oppressed. The organized workers are playing a more important role in the affairs of the community and state, in politics and civic affairs. They are reaching out to their allies, the farmers, the city middle classes, and the Negro people. They are more and more alert to the problems of their class and the people and are showing initiative in projecting and fighting for solutions to these problems.

There has emerged, specifically, the Negro industrial proletariat, which is of tremendous significance. This is the class which is increasingly giving leadership to the struggle of the Negro people for liberation and which is responsible for the greater firmness and heightened militancy shown in this struggle. This was reflected in the historic Southern Negro Youth Congress held in New Orleans last April, and it is also reflected in the trade unions and the other organizations of the Negro people.

The mood of the Negro people is one of determination to win their democratic rights and to make for themselves and the people as a whole a better life. This was beautifully expressed in the proclamation of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, issued by 364 young Negro delegates:

"We have hope, and yet we have more than hope; we have power, the power of a unified people . . . the will to fight and to achieve. Out of these plans and visions, we shall

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sweep away all obstacles and make for ourselves and for America a wonderful greatness . . . a proof that mankind can achieve a new order."

Representative of the new forces is the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which held its second conference at Chattanooga in April. Within this movement are united the most decisive sections of the labor movement, the Negro people, the organized farmers and progressive middle class groups. There were weaknesses in the Chattanooga conference, due partly to the failure of honest progressives to orient themselves to the new situation caused by the outbreak of the imperialist war and the abandonment of the New Deal by Roosevelt, and partly to the failure of labor to come forward boldly to give leadership to the movement. But despite these weaknesses, the conference adopted an uncompromising program of progressive action and legislation for the abolition of the poll tax, for equal rights for the Negro people, for civil liberties, and for the protection of labor's rights and living standards.

The conference endorsed the activity of the Civil Rights Committee of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare which drafted the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill and which is leading the broad campaign for its adoption. This committee is also attacking the poll tax on another front, that of challenging its constitutionality in Federal courts. Meanwhile, in Washington, the Conference leadership has established the active unity of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., Railroad Brotherhoods, Negro organizations, and many progressive middle class groups in support of the Geyer Bill.

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, especially through the work of the Civil Rights Committee, is making an effective contribution to the fight for democracy in the South and will undoubtedly receive the energetic support of all progressives throughout the country.

A new force in the South today is the youth. On every hand as we go among the young people of the South, we find an impatience with old prejudices, a readiness to face the issue of Negro oppression, and the definite recognition that there is "something wrong" with the capitalist system. The young people's hatred of war has been expressed in numerous demonstrations, especially on college and high school campuses, in the recent period. A strong delegation of Southern youth attended the American Youth Congress session at Lake Geneva in July.

Finally, a force with which the reactionaries must reckon is the Communist Party, which has organization in every Southern state. The Communist Party in the South has many organizational weaknesses, but it is, notwithstanding, a party of the Southern toilers, Negro and white, deeply rooted in the mines, mills, and rural districts. It is working to overcome its weaknesses. A large section of its membership has been tested in struggle, in difficult work against odds, under conditions

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of persecution and terror. It is the party which is profoundly sensitive to the needs, and energetically fosters the unity, of the Negro people and the white toilers as the basic requirement for the full emancipation of the Southern people.

These, then, are the new forces that have emerged in the South and which provide the basis for a mighty people's front of the Southern people for peace, jobs and democratic rights. Every step of the Bourbons to make war on the Southern people and to crush the growing unity of Negro and white will simply sharpen the understanding of the people and cement these bonds. It will but hasten recognition by the people of the conclusions drawn by Comrade Browder in August, 1938, in connection with the publication of the *Report on the Economic Conditions of the South:*

". . . the South requires socialism for its *full* emancipation from the terrible conditions revealed in the report. . . . The Soviet Union with its socialist system is revealing, in its development of its many constituent republics especially those formerly exploited under tsarism, how economic deserts under capitalism quickly become blooming gardens under socialism."

Immediate Tasks

The speed with which the Southern people come to recognize this profound truth depends on how well and how quickly we organize the people in immediate struggle for jobs and democratic rights. This poses before the Party and the progressives a series of concrete tasks:

1. We must utilize the election campaign to the fullest extent to bring our message to the people, to mobilize the popular forces in defense of peace and democracy and to defend the constitutional rights of the Party. This requires, in the first place, that we get and maintain the Party on the ballot. It requires also that we conduct our election campaign in such a way as to bring us closest to the masses.

The platform of our Party, and the program as emphasized by Comrade Browder in his report to the Eleventh Convention, meets the needs of the Southern people and will receive a warm response from the Southern people wherever it is brought to them. This is already shown by the facility with which the Kentucky state organization of our Party collected within a few weeks more than a thousand signatures to a petition to place the Party on the ballot.

There is the possibility of a surprisingly large vote for the Communist candidates in the Southern states, and for this reason the reactionary state machines are making desperate efforts to keep us off the ballot. The ruling class remembers that the South once gave a large vote to Eugene Debs, whose mantle of leadership in the struggle against war, for democracy, jobs and socialism, has now fallen upon Earl Browder. They are also afraid to face a concrete expression of the growing unity of Negro and white which will be registered in the vote for Earl Browder and James W. Ford, the Presidential and Vice-

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Presidential candidates of the Communist Party .

The ruling class fear is all the more reason for us to have confidence and determination. We must enter the election campaign in this spirit, determined to reach and surpass the Debs vote in the South.

2. Despite the progress of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. among the unorganized workers in the South, the trade union movement remains relatively weak as compared with other sections of the country. As William Z. Foster has pointed out, a progressive trade unionist should be constantly active in campaigns to organize the unorganized. It is not necessary to wait until a salaried organizer comes to town from headquarters. Rank-and-file organizing committees should be built in every local union and central body, and wherever possible in local shops and mills, working to organize the unorganized. This is especially true in lumber, the second largest industry in the South, which is almost compeletely unorganized and where wage standards are as low as in agriculture. This also applies to the oil industry in Texas and Oklahoma where organizing committees have recently begun work. Much needs to be done in the textile and steel industries, especially among the Negro workers in the latter industry.

3. The South is still, today, predominantly agrarian. The farmers, and the small town and rural population generally, must be won for the struggle for peace, democratic rights and security.

In discussing the matter of an agrarian program before the Farm Conference of the Eleventh National Convention, James S. Allen, said:

"Such a program must base itself primarily upon the needs of the small farmers and put forth those demands of the middle farmers which are also in the interest of the small producers. Furthermore, such a program must advance collaboration of the mass of farmers with progressive labor; for without such collaboration it is impossible to fulfil the demands of either the farmers or the workers. It is also necessary that such a program, while advancing legislative demands, particularly in connection with the election campaign, be primarily a program of action and struggle for the most pressing demands of the working farmers." ("The Farmer and the Struggle Against the War Program," *The Communist,* July, 1940, p. 640.)

The needs of the Southern farm masses coincide with the needs of the impoverished farm people everywhere. Southern farmers, as farmers throughout the country, demand an increase in Federal appropriations for emergency and direct relief; the extension and development of democratic rights on the countryside by assuring participation of tenants and sharecroppers, Negro and white, in committees administering the Federal farm program; old age insurance and health and educational facilities; and higher prices for their products.

Of especial importance for Southern farmers are two planks listed by Comrade Allen:

"5. The enactment of a Federal

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Tenancy Law which shall make it imperative to prosecute usurers, abolish plantation commissaries and forced buying at stores designated by the landlord; guarantee the right of collective bargaining for farm workers and sharecroppers; enforce written tenant and sharecropper contracts; provide for tenant and sharecropping recording of accounts, and for compensation by the landlord to the tenant for improvements on the land; suspend landlords' liens on crop and chattel during emergencies, such as crop failure and sudden price decline; provide for minimum housing and sanitary conditions in dwellings on tenant land; bring about repeal of state peonage laws which make it unlawful to quit a tenancy while in debt.

"6. The enactment of a Homestead Act for Today which establishes a ten-year moratorium on the mortgage debt of small and middle farmers; prohibits evictions and foreclosures for non-payment of rent, interest, various production debts and taxes due to circumstances beyond the farmers' control; refinances the farm debt at a level corresponding to the productive value of the land with long-term loans at low interest rates; establishes a Federal system requiring the states to enact a graduated land tax, exempting all homesteads below $5,000 from tax levies; pools all Federal, state, bank and corporation farm lands acquired by foreclosure into the public domain from which it shall be granted, leased or sold on long terms with payments varying according to the occupant's annual income, in the form of family-sized homesteads or for the use of production cooperatives, with sole preferences given to foreclosed farmers, at present landless, tenant farmers, sharecroppers and farm laborers, Negro and white." (*Ibid.*, pp. 641-642.)

4. We have discussed above the growing movement of the Negro people, especially around the Southern Negro Youth Congress. In connection with this movement, it is of vital importance that the white trade unionists and white farmers be won to active support of the demands of the Negro people: for the right to vote, for the Anti-Lynching Bill, against police brutality, for equal pay for equal work and the right to any job, and against the whole system of Jim Crow and segregation. The anti-imperialist People's Front will take shape and grow in the South only to the extent that this great truth is fully understood by the white masses. This alone will provide the guarantee that the present democratic upsurge can avoid the pitfalls that wrecked the democratic movements in 1875 and 1900.

5. Comrade Browder has indicated, in his report to the Eleventh Convention, our tasks in connection with the struggle for the abolition of the poll tax, in the passage of the Geyer Bill at this session of Congress, and the struggle against all the restrictions on the exercise of the franchise by the Negro people. This struggle for democracy must be waged, not by the South alone, but by the labor and the progressive forces throughout the country, with the active support of the Communist Party.*

* See "Resolution on Democratic Rights in the South," *The Communist*, July, 1940, pp. 618-20.

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6. The Southern people, primarily because of their agrarian history, have always suffered from a tendency to minimize organization, organization, that is, in the Leninist sense. The Communists have the responsibility of carrying sound organizational principles into the trade unions, the farm organizations, the Negro organizations, etc. But we must also eradicate every trace of organizational underestimation in our own ranks. This is an essential part of our job of building the Communist Party in the South to fulfil its indispensable role in promoting the people's movement for peace, jobs, and democratic rights.

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FOR A GREATER VOTE AND A STRONGER PARTY!

(Report delivered on May 31, 1940, to the Election Campaign and Party Building Commission at the Eleventh National Convention of the Communist Party, United States of America.)

BY ROY HUDSON

OUR task here today is to concentrate attention on those problems of Party building which flow directly from the present situation and our central tasks. In doing this we must be guided especially by our experiences in the past eight months, boldly facing the many weaknesses revealed in our work.

It will not be necessary to make a long and detailed report, since we are approaching this task today with the ground already prepared for us. We have before us the report of Comrade Browder to this Convention* as well as his report to the February Plenum of the National Committee ** and the resolution which dealt with this question.*** We should study these reports and the resolution, interpreting them to the entire Party in terms of the experiences and tasks of each branch, of each Party member.

Let us here summarize the basic content of the reports and the resolution.

First: In the face of the world-shaking events and the necessity for a sharp and rapid tactical turn, our Party, despite the most ferocious and concerted attack it has ever faced, rapidly adopted a correct policy, won the entire membership for this policy, and emerged from the first stage of this new situation more firmly united than ever, both ideologically and organizationally, carrying on work among the masses with greater effectiveness, and strengthening its bonds with the masses.

Second: With the correct political line as the basis, the approach to the solution of the many new and pressing organizational tasks of the Party was indicated last February by Comrade Browder in his report as follows:

"First—more energetically, more intensively, more broadly going to the masses; and, second, taking systematic measures of a technical nature to safeguard the membership and the Party organs from interference by enemy attacks." *(Cited place,* p. 22.)

* Earl Browder, *The People's Road to Peace,* Workers Library Publishers, New York.
** Earl Browder, *The People Against the War-Makers,* Workers Library Publishers, New York.
*** *The Communist,* March, 1940, p. 211.

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Third:

"The historic tasks facing the American working class today place upon the Communists a great responsibility which can only be effectively carried through by further strengthening the Party ideologically, politically and organizationally." (February Plenum resolution. *Cited place*, p. 217.)

Fourth:

"In the present political situation particularly, the Party has great opportunities for mass recruiting, in which the whole Party, all of the Party organizations, and every Party member must be active. This work, to be successful, must be systematically organized." *(Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.)

Proved in the Crucible of Experience

The developments since the February Plenum have fully confirmed these basic observations. The membership has even more firmly rallied around the Party and its leadership. We have just gone through a sixty-day pre-Convention discussion. Our membership had full freedom to discuss all questions at the branch meetings and in the *Discussion Bulletin*. Aside from some isolated manifestations of unclarity on separate questions, we can register complete unanimity of the entire membership behind the policies of the National Committee. Our enemies will undoubtedly shout scornfully about this unanimity. They will invent all sorts of fantastic explanations. They certainly have had no such success with their campaign for so-called "National Unity." They will have even less success in the future, despite the frantic efforts of the Social-Democratic betrayers and agents of the bourgeoisie. And around our *proletarian* unity of the advance guard of our class, the workers and toilers will rally in large numbers. The Party, on the basis of its bold struggle against imperialist war and capitalist reaction, has won the support of increasing sections of the workers and the toilers generally. This is evidenced by many facts. The slogans of the Party, the campaign of the Party to keep the United States out of the imperialist war are finding ever greater response among the people, especially the workers, the trade unions. This was seen in the significant April 6 demonstrations, and is to be seen in the many resolutions passed by the unions.

The attack against the Party and its leaders is meeting ever greater opposition from the people. While only isolated individuals spoke up during the first stages of the attack and the persecution of our General Secretary, the movement of opposition to the reactionary policies of the F.B.I., the Dies Committee and to the persecution of the Communists has today grown to serious proportions. More and more people realize that the attack on the Communists is an attack on the Bill of Rights, on the civil liberties of the people. As proof of this we have the various statements of outstanding individuals, both separately and collectively, condemning the Dies Committee, and the F.B.I. raids, etc.

We saw the first serious effort to bring together on a national scale the forces organizing to defend

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civil liberties in the Washington Conference, to which a member of our National Committee, Comrade Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, was invited as one of the reporters. The opposition to the expulsion of Comrade Flynn from the American Civil Liberties Union, within the American Civil Liberties Union itself, is a further evidence of this development.

Last but not least, let me mention the success achieved so far in collection of petitions to place our Party on the ballot. And let us bear in mind the circumstances, the atmosphere in which this success was achieved. Yet the response of the masses surprised even our own comrades. This was true in Pennsylvania, in Michigan, in Ohio; and as for West Virginia, we were all happily surprised. Our comrades in West Virginia deserve our heartfelt congratulations. In view of their achievement every state must determine to get on the ballot. Surely there will be no excuse for failure. Experiences in other states where serious efforts to get on the ballot have already been made, or are under way, tell the same story. I could cite many examples; but I think the several states cited above fully confirm our analysis at the February Plenum, as they confirm the basic lessons I mentioned above.

At the February Plenum we decided to undertake a two-month recruiting campaign (April 6-May 30). What have we achieved in this campaign? What lessons can we draw from this campaign? We did not set any quotas for the state organizations. We set ourselves modest tasks. Frankly, the major objective we had in mind in this drive was to get ourselves out of the rut, to check the decline in recruiting that had set in. We had reached the lowest point in many years.

Have we achieved this modest aim? We have. By April the number of recruits was the largest since August, 1939. The May figures were even higher.

These figures show that we have pulled ourselves out of the rut. If we undertake the task seriously, we can take advantage of the situation. We have a sound basis for strengthening the Party. We shall deal later with our next task—recruiting in the course of the election campaign.

Registration Shows Consolidation of the Party

With regard to the 1940 registration, we must take note of a decline. This decline has occurred in practically all states. Naturally, the decline has been greater in numbers in the larger states; but the proportion is about the same. New York, for example, has lost about 15 per cent—the same as the loss nationally.

At the same time, we observe that the dues payments for the first four months of 1940 are higher in comparison with the January, 1940, registration than those for the corresponding period of last year, in proportion to the larger registration in January, 1939. What does this mean? It means that the Party is today more consolidated than before, and that a larger percentage of the Party membership has been activized.

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But these figures together—the lower registration and the higher percentage of dues payments—reveal something else besides. They reveal that those who failed to register were not among the most active part of the membership. They were those most affected by the new situation. And if we follow up these figures and the people behind these figures further we find that the members who dropped out were not doing so because they disagreed with Party policies. To be sure, they were not among the most developed Party members. They may even have been unclear on some questions. But they did not leave the Party primarily through disagreement. They were for the most part industrial workers, workers in the larger factories, members of trade unions. They dropped out because they feared the attacks of the Dies Committee, the F.B.I., the reactionaries in some of the unions, the company stool pigeons—they feared discrimination, loss of jobs.

We can prove this by many examples; but one will suffice. In a certain state we suffered considerable losses in the registration mostly among industrial workers in large plants. But these same comrades took a leading part in the factories and local unions in opposition to the war, against the Hoover-Mannerheim relief drive, and in defense of the Party. The success of the signature drive in that state is further evidence that while we lost members, our influence has been growing. The fact is that through neglect and failure to do everything possible to safeguard the membership —in some cases we can say criminal neglect—names of Party comrades fell into the hands of our enemies. Under such conditions is it any wonder that some of the most active trade unionists did not re-register? They told us frankly the reason, and one can easily understand their position. Certainly, such people can and must be brought back to the Party. To begin with, we must establish and maintain contact with them, cooperate with them in the mass organizations, activize them in the anti-war struggle, the election campaign, etc.

Was it inevitable that we should sustain these losses? Certainly not. With greater personal attention, the necessary adjustment in the work of the branch, greater efforts to safeguard against enemy attacks, more reliance on personal contacts and also *greater political clarification,* the overwhelming majority of these members could have been kept in the Party. *And what is* more, *we should* without *delay undertake this task now!* In a sense, the success that we shall have in bringing a good portion of these comrades back to the Party will be a test for us as to what extent we have taken "systematic measures of a technical nature to safeguard the membership and the Party organs from interference by enemy attacks." The solution of this problem, the overcoming of the causes for the decline in registration, will also be the best preparation, not only for the ability of the Party, on the basis of its correct policies, constantly to strengthen and broaden its contact

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with the masses, but for the next phase of Party building.

Neither Panic Nor Complacency

What are some of the steps we can take to adjust our organizational structure and methods of work to the new situation? We have some positive and negative experience. We know from this experience how correct Comrade Browder was when he warned:

"If we . . . go to the masses without the most careful systematic measures of technical defense, technical safeguarding, we may be leaving ourselves open to serious blows. But if we rely upon technical safeguards without the most intensive reaching and consolidating of mass contacts, all technical safeguards will be valueless." (The People Against the War-Makers, p. 23.)

In those cases where, in the new situation, our comrades allowed a loosening in their contact with the masses and a slackening of their mass work, all their emphasis upon organizational adjustment failed, for that reason, to strengthen the Party. It is not possible to strengthen the Party in such a way.

Of course, there were cases where some comrades in local organizations had a tendency to be simply overwhelmed by the situation, attempting neither to maintain and increase their contacts with the masses nor to make the necessary organizational adjustments. Such tendencies, if not already overcome, have, we hope, been eliminated by the elections that were part of the Party Convention preparations. Where such comrades are still leaders of branches or sections, the sooner they are changed the better.

A more general defect in our work, especially after the first few weeks of the war, was to be found in those instances in which comrades continued and strengthened their mass work but became careless and even neglected to effect the organizational adjustments and measures about which we spoke at the February Plenum and subsequently. They neglected this necessary task because they found that the attack which developed against the Party met with resistance and did not proceed as rapidly as they had expected. This was an error.

The situation calls for neither panic nor complacency. We must neither give up a single one of our rights to carry on our work, nor fail to take all the necessary and possible measures to assure our ability to maintain contact with the masses and carry on our work under any and all circumstances.

This must be emphasized even more than in the past, because of the greater rapidity with which events are moving, the furious speed with which the Administration is driving to involve our nation in the imperialist war on the side of the Allies and the intensified reactionary drive against civil liberties.

To improve the work of the Party generally, we should strive to establish something akin to the steward system, especially where we have a large number of comrades in shops, and where the comrades belong to mass organizations. Such "stewards" would supplement

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the regular Party organization. They would maintain contact with the members, help them to understand Party policy, help them to secure Party literature and the press, and help to keep them in good standing by collecting their dues, if for some reason they are not attending their branch meetings regularly. This steward-system can become a very important and effective means of keeping contact with the Party membership.

Emphasis on more compact organizational forms must, however, be combined with another form that will compensate for the valuable features which exist in the larger branch and which will be lacking in the smaller organization. A large branch helps to give a certain political quality, a feeling of strength, and to provide competent political discussion, which will be lacking in the smaller branch. The large branch, however, finds it more difficult to keep personal contact with every member. Some of the advantages of the larger branch can be retained by organizing frequent open meetings to which sympathizers are invited—open section meetings, city meetings, meetings of a general political character, with good speakers, making sure that both the Party membership and non-Party workers will attend. This system, when employed, is proving very effective.

More Intensive Educational Activities

In the present situation we must give more attention than ever before to both mass agitation and education of the Party membership. This means greater emphasis on mass meetings, distribution of our literature, the circulation of our press, as well as study and reading on the part of the Party membership, political discussion in the branches, classes, study circles, etc.

Today, less than ever, can these two tasks—mass agitation and Party education—be separated. For effective mass agitation we must raise the ideological level of the Party membership. The leading comrades, from the State Bureaus down, must set the example by self-study, organization of study groups, emphasis upon reading and discussion of articles in the *Daily Worker, The Communist, The Communist International;* of important pamphlets, articles, and speeches by Comrades Browder, Foster, and others; and constantly urging and helping the comrades to study the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* and other important Marxist-Leninist literature.

One of the outstanding achievements of the recent period has been the increase in the sale of our literature, especially of low-priced pamphlets. This shows that the masses are eager to learn the meaning of events, that they wish to know what the Communist Party has to say. Every branch, every Party member, in addition to carrying on oral agitation through meetings and personal contacts, should strive to develop and increase the sale of literature. In the election campaign, of course, we shall especially have the greatest opportunity to develop this work and we

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should strive to make it a permanent part of our activity.

In our efforts to recruit we can also be more succesful if, in addition to the old methods, we develop as a regular system the organization of classes, study groups of sympathizers and prospective Party members. Just as it is true that a Party member who is politically developed will be less likely to fall victim to attack and intimidation, so will a prospective member who in general accepts the Party program *be more likely* under the present conditions to join the Party, if he or she is more politically developed. Heretofore we organized only classes for new members. Now we must also organize classes for prospective members. We may not call them classes. But this form of education becomes very urgent. Such groups of sympathizers even before they join the Party, even if they do not join the Party, can be drawn into activity around the election campaign, the struggle against the imperialist war, in defense of the Party, in support of our press, etc.

In the coming period we must pay great attention to the circulation of our press. We all see to what lengths our enemies are going in their attempt to silence our press. These efforts may increase. They may try to deal us new blows. But all this only emphasizes the importance of the press—in the first place the *Daily Worker*—to all our work. The *Daily Worker* has constantly improved, but the circulation is by no means keeping pace with this improvement. Why is this? First of all, because we are not yet giving enough attention to the circulation of the press. How often, when we read something in the *Daily Worker* do we feel enthusiastic and say to ourselves: If only the masses could read this! But they can and they must. It is to a large extent up to us.

We must first of all find the ways and means to have the Party membership read the *Daily Worker*. Then we must strive to get the *Daily Worker* into the hands of the most active and key workers in the trade unions, the leading forces in the anti-war struggle, the toiling farmers, the Negro people, the youth, the women. With our present membership and our influence, and in view of the situation in the country, our press can and should have many times its present circulation. But it cannot be achieved merely by wishing. We must work out plans and carry them through. We must use, to every extent possible, the capitalist apparatus available—the newsstands, etc. But in most cities we have not these facilities. And even where we have them and utilize them even better than we do today, we must organize an apparatus of our own which will be able to function under any and all conditions. The carrier system, routes for our own distributors—all this must be taken up in earnest. If this task is hard, well, we must be prepared for even harder tasks in the future.

Special efforts must be made to bring the *Daily Worker* to the industrial workers and the workers in the large factories. *In this con-*

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nection we should revive the system of regular worker-correspondents. This will help both in improving the contents of the *Daily Worker* and in circulating it among the workers.

For all these tasks, the situation requires, more than ever before, the training, testing, and promotion of new forces to leadership, especially among the industrial workers. We must not be satisfied with just doing things; we must do things right. Strive to do them better. Demand more from every leading comrade. Demand greater political alertness, better contacts with the masses, more vigilance against the enemy and alien influences in the Party, greater discipline, a better check-up on the fulfilment of tasks. We must be bolder in advancing young proletarians to leadership, in promoting Negro and women comrades, in helping them to become first-class qualified Party leaders.

Recruiting in the Election Campaign

We must be clear that the building of the Party, recruiting new members, is not a task that can be separated from our mass work. We can do mass work without recruiting; unfortunately we have demonstrated this only too well. *But we cannot do effective mass recruiting without the maximum mobilization of the Party and its participation in the struggles of the masses.*

The next months will be months of great interest and activity among the masses. The danger of America's entering the war as a belligerent, the attacks on the trade unions and the anti-war forces, the effects of the armament program and the more and more rapid steps toward a war economy, the attacks on civil liberties, the unfolding of the M-Day plans—all this will meet with ever greater resistance of the masses, especially so if we properly organize and mobilize all our forces to help develop and lead these struggles.

In this connection, we must especially meet the task of mobilizing our forces to help carry through the organization drives undertaken by the C.I.O. and other unions, the organization of the Ford workers, particularly. Similarly, we must give special attention to help develop the activities decided upon by the National Negro Congress and the American Youth Congress around the burning immediate demands of the Negro people and the youth—equal rights to jobs, W.P.A. jobs, the Anti-Lynching Bill, the abolition of the poll tax, the Youth Act, etc. The demands of the millions of unemployed, the demands of the working farmers, all these are our struggles.

Only on the basis of this mass work, the full mobilization of the Party for these struggles, shall we be able to carry through mass recruiting to the Party. We must not allow a lapse between this Convention and the heat of the election campaign, September to November, to occur. The class struggle will not go on a vacation this year. Certainly this year we cannot allow the summer months to interfere with our work. War is raging in Europe and Asia, and Wall Street and Roosevelt threaten to involve our

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people. We cannot spare a day, an hour from rousing the masses in struggle.

We do not propose that we set ourselves any quotas or goals at this time. Let us, on the basis of these struggles, the strengthening of our organizational work, the overcoming of weaknesses, *recruit as part of these struggles.* Let recruiting become a regular task to us, just as collection of dues, circulating our press, fighting in the interest of the people.

We can and should, of course, organize this work of recruiting. During the summer months there will be all sorts of outings, picnics, outdoor gatherings of the masses. We should be there carrying out our work. We have already tens of thousands of names of people who signed our nominating petitions—and they will grow into hundreds of thousands. Let us organize to visit systematically these contacts for subscriptions to the press, to reach them with our literature and for the purpose of recruiting new thousands into the Party. Of course, any Party branch, section or even state organization can, if it so wishes, decide upon certain goals month by month or for the period of June to August.

By the end of August, we shall be entering the more intensive and final phase of the election campaign, which will be accompanied by thousands of Party mass meetings of all kinds, the national tours of our Presidential candidates, the local tours of the State and Congressional candidates, radio speeches, etc. Then, on the basis of our achievements between now and that time, of the developments, and of the situation then prevailing, it will be possible, we believe, to set ourselves a goal for recruitment for the period from Labor Day to Election Day.

We are all aware of the present moment, its significance, its possibilities. We are hopeful and confident. Pessimism reigns in the ranks of our enemies—the capitalists, the war-makers, their Social-Democratic agents. We have confidence in the future, a confidence that comes from the progressive role of our class, the insoluble contradictions of capitalism in war and decay, a confidence that comes from strength and power of the great socialist Soviet Union and its effective peace policy. A confidence that comes from the clarity and unity of our own Party and its tried leadership headed by Comrades Browder and Foster.

It is in this spirit that we face the future, face our immediate tasks, face the coming election struggle. Fully confident that no attack or intimidation of the enemy will swerve us from our purpose, from our objective to organize and lead the masses in struggle against imperialist war and capitalist reaction, to the final goal of socialism. In this spirit we pledge ourselves in the midst of the struggles of the masses to build our Party and to emerge from the coming election struggle having multiplied the vote for Browder and Ford, added tens of thousands of new members to our ranks, and better prepared for the struggles to follow.

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HOW DOES SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL QUESTION?

BY JOSEPH STALIN

[*The following article was written in 1904 in the Georgian language and published that year in issue No. 7 (September) of* Proletariatis Brdzola (The Struggle of the Proletariat), *organ of the All-Caucasian Committee of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia. It was first published in Russian translation in December, 1939, on the occasion of Comrade Stalin's sixtieth birthday. In German, from which this text has been translated for* The Communist, *the article first appeared in the weekly* Die Welt *(issued in Stockholm), Nos. 10-11, 1940.*

The reader will bear in mind that the term "Social-Democracy" in the title and throughout the article refers to the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia (Bolsheviks), which, in 1918, assumed the name The Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks), and in 1925, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks).—The Editor.]

EVERYTHING changes.... Social life changes, and with it also the "national question." At different times different classes appear on the arena of battle, and each class conceives the "national question" in its own way. It is clear that at different times the "national question" *serves different interests* and acquires different aspects, depending on *when* and by *which* class it is posed.

We had, for example, the so-called *"national question" of the nobility* at the time when the Georgian nobleman — following Russia's annexation of Georgia— began to feel the disadvantage in the loss of the old privileges and the former power he had held under the Georgian rulers, and desired the *"liberation of Georgia,"* considering it offensive to his dignity to be a "mere subject." *He wanted thereby to place the Georgian rulers and the nobility at the head of "Georgia"* and in this way *to place the fate of the Georgian people in their hands!* That was *feudal-monarchist "nationalism."* This "movement" has left no visible traces in the life of the Georgians, and, apart from individual conspiracies of the Georgian noblemen against the Russian regents in the Caucasus, did not have a single deed to its credit. The events of social life had but to touch it lightly and this "movement," weak at best, was destroyed at its roots. And, in fact, the establishment of

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the Noblemen's Bank, the growth of the class antagonisms in city and countryside, the strengthened movement of the village poor, etc., all of this struck a *death blow* at the Georgian nobility and simultaneously at "*feudal-monarchist nationalism*" as well. The Georgian nobility split into two groups. One of these groups abandoned all "nationalism" and proferred its hand to the Russian autocracy, to secure the reward of comfortable sinecures, cheap credits, and agricultural machinery, to secure government protection against rural "rebels," etc. The other, much weaker, group of the Georgian nobility, once more made friends with the Georgian bishops and archimandrites, and in this way hid under the pinions of clericalism their "nationalism" undermined by life. This group is zealously engaged in the restoration of the ruined Georgian churches (that forms the main article in its "program"!)—the "monuments of former greatness"—and awaits devoutly a miracle that will realize its *landlord-monarchist* "wishes."

Thus the feudal-monarchist nationalism, in the last hours of its existence, assumed a clerical form.

Simultaneously modern life has posed with us the *national question of the bourgeoisie. As soon as the young* Georgian bourgeoisie realized the dire effect upon it of free competition with the "foreign" capitalists, it began, through the medium of Georgian national-democrats to stammer about an *independent* Georgia. The Georgian bourgeoisie desired to protect the Georgian market by tariff restrictions, forcibly to drive the "foreign" bourgeoisie out of this market, to raise artificially the prices of commodities, and by these "patriotic" machinations to win successes in the field of enrichment.

That was and remains the goal of the nationalism of the Georgian bourgeoisie. It remains to be said that to achieve this goal a force was needed, and this force was to be found in the proletariat. Only the proletariat could breathe life into the flabby "patriotism" of the bourgeoisie. It had to win the proletariat, hence the "national-democrats" appeared on the scene. They expended much powder to "refute" scientific socialism, they vilified and abused the Social-Democrats, and called upon the Georgian proletarians to turn their backs upon them; they lauded the Georgian proletariat and exhorted it "in the interest of the workers themselves" simply to go on strengthening the Georgian bourgeoisie. Incessantly they implored the Georgian proletarians: Do not destroy "Georgia" [or the Georgian bourgeoisie], forget "inner differences," make friends with the Georgian bourgeoisie, etc. But in vain! The fairy tales of the bourgeois publicists could not lull the Georgian proletariat! The ruthless attacks of the Georgian Marxists, and particularly the mighty class collision which merged the Russian, Armenian, Georgian and other proletarians into a single socialist fighting-detachment, dealt a crushing blow to our *bourgeois nationalists* and drove them from the battlefield.

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"To save the honor of the besmirched name," our execrated patriots had "at least to change their color," at least to put on a socialist cloak, especially since they could not make the socialist ideas their own. Indeed, there appeared on the scene the illegal . . . bourgeois-nationalist—if you please—"socialist" organ *Sakartvelo!* In this way they sought to decoy the Georgian workers! But it was too late. The Georgian workers had learned to tell black from white, they easily realized that the bourgeois nationalists "had only changed their color," but not the essence of their viewpoint, that the *Sakartvelo was socialist only in name.* Understanding that, they exposed the "saviors" of Georgia to scorn. The hopes of the *Sakartvelo* Don Quixotes were not fulfilled.

On the other hand, our economic development is gradually erecting a bridge between the leading circles of the Georgian bourgeoisie and "Russia"; it is creating an economic and political tie-up of these circles with "Russia" and thereby is cutting the ground from under this already seriously shaken nationalism. This is the second blow dealt our bourgeois nationalism!

On the scene of struggle there has come forward a new class, the *proletariat,* and with it has arisen a new "national question," the *"national question" of the proletariat.* Just as the proletariat differs from the nobility and the bourgeoisie, so does the "national question" as posed by the proletariat differ from the "national question" of the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

Let us speak of this "nationalism."

What is Social-Democracy's conception of the *"national question"*? The proletariat of Russia has long ago begun to speak of struggle. The goal of every struggle, as we know, is victory. For the victory of the proletariat, however, the unity of *all* workers *without distinction as to nationality* is necessary. It is clear that the breaking down of national barriers and the close collaboration of the Russian, Georgian, Armenian, Polish, Jewish and other proletarians is the indispensable condition for the victory of the proletariat of Russia. This is in the interests of the proletariat of Russia.

But the Russian autocracy, the worst enemy of the proletariat of Russia, offers unremitting resistance to the unity of the workers. In robber fashion, it persecutes the national culture, the language, the customs and the institutions of the "alien" nationalities of Russia. The autocracy robs them of their indispensable civil rights, oppresses them in every possible way, sows pharisaic mistrust and hostility among them, and incites them to bloody clashes. It thereby demonstrates to them that the sole purpose of the Russian autocracy consists in making enemies of the nations inhabiting Russia, in stirring national dissension among them, in strengthening national barriers, in order thereby, with even greater success, to divide the proletarians and to split the entire proletariat of Russia into small national groups as the means of undermining the workers'

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class consciousness, their class unity.

This is essential to the interests of Russian reaction; this is the policy of Russian autocracy.

It is clear that the interests of the proletariat of Russia inevitably must, sooner or later, clash with the reactionary policy of the tsarist autocracy. Moreover, things have come to this point; and precisely on this basis has the "national question" arisen in the Social-Democracy.

How shall the national barriers which have been erected between nations be broken down, how shall national exclusiveness be overcome in order to bring the proletarians of Russia closer to one another, and to establish closer cooperation among them?

That is the content of the "national question" in the Social-Democracy.

To dissolve into separate national parties and out of them to create a "free league," answer the Social-Democratic *Federalists*.

And this is repeated by the "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers."

As we see, we are not advised to unite into a single party of Russia with a single central body at its head, but to dissolve into many parties with a number of leading central bodies, and all in order to strengthen class unity! We wish to *bring* the proletarians of the various nationalities *closer* to one another. How shall we undertake this? You must divide the proletariat of Russia into separate parties and you will reach your goal!—reply the Social-Democratic Federalists. We wish to overcome national barriers. What measures shall we adopt? Strengthen national barriers by organizational barriers and you will reach your goal!—they answer. And all this is given as advice to us proletarians of Russia, who wage our fight under the same political conditions, who have one and the same enemy! In a word, we are told: Act in the interest of the enemy and destroy your own sacred objective with your own hands!

Suppose we declare ourselves for a moment in accord with the Social-Democratic Federalists and suppose we follow them; let us see where they will bring us! This means indeed: Pursue the liar to the threshold of the lie.

Suppose that we had obeyed our Federalists and had founded separate national parties? What would have happened as a consequence?

That is not hard to recognize. Until the present time, so long as we were *centralists*, our main attention was focused on the conditions common to all proletarians, on the *unity* of their interests; we spoke of their "national differences" only in so far as this did not contradict their *common* interests; until the present time the primary question for us has been: What unites the proletarians of the nationalities of Russia, what have they in common, in order on the basis of these common interests to build a single centralized party of the workers of all Russia? Now, after "we" have become Federalists, our attention will be claimed by another main question: Wherein do the proletari-

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ans of the nationalities of Russia differ, what differences exist between them in order, on the basis of these "national differences," to build separate national parties? In this way the "national differences," which are secondary for the centralists, become the foundation of the national parties for the Federalists.

If we follow this road, we shall, sooner or later, be forced to the conclusion that the "national" and any other "differences" of the Armenian people, for example, are exactly the same as those of the Armenian bourgeoisie, that the Armenian proletarians and the Armenian bourgeoisie have the same customs and the same character, that they constitute *one people, one* indivisible "nation."* From this it is but a step to the "basis for joint action," to be accepted by both bourgeoisie and proletariat who would join hands as members of one and the same "nation." The pharisaic policy of the autocratic tsar may appear as "new" proof for this friendship. Mention of class antagonisms will appear as "inadmissible doctrinairism." And then some poetic hand will "more boldly" pluck the narrow national chords still to be found among the *proletarians of the nationalities of* Russia, and will make them vibrate in corresponding fashion. A credit account will be opened for the chauvinist charlatans; friends will appear as foes, foes as friends.

* The "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers" has just taken this praiseworthy step. In its manifesto it declares definitely that one "must not separate the [Armenian —*J.S.*] proletariat from [the Armenian—*J.S.*] society; the united [Armenian] proletariat must be the most rational and strongest member of the Armenian people"; that the "Armenian proletariat united in the Socialist Party must endeavor to determine Armenian social thought, that the Armenian proletariat will be the true son of its race," etc. (See Article 3 of the manifesto of the "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers.")

First, this is beyond understanding: Why "must the Armenian proletariat not be separated from Armenian society" when this "separation" is proceeding at a rapid pace? Did not the united Armenian proletariat somehow "separate" itself from Armenian society when in the year 1900 (in Tiflis) it declared war upon the Armenian bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-minded Armenians? Really, what is the "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers" except a class organization of the Armenian proletarians which has "separated" itself from the other classes of Armenian society? Or is the "Social Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers" perhaps an organization of all classes!? Then, can the fighting Armenian proletariat restrict itself to "determining Armenian social thought?" Is it not rather duty-bound to advance beyond it, to declare war upon this "social thought" which is bourgeois to the core, and inject a revolutionary spirit into it? The facts show that it is thus duty-bound. If it is so, then it is obvious that the "manifesto" should not direct the attention of the reader to the "determination of social thought," but to the struggle with this thought, to the necessity of revolutionizing it: in this way it would give a better characterization of the tasks of the "Socialist proletariat." And finally, can the Armenian proletariat somehow be the "true son of its race," when a part of this race—the Armenian bourgeoisie—sucks its blood like a leech, and another part—the Armenian clergy—not only sucks the blood of the workers, but also systematically corrupts their minds? All these questions are simple and inevitable if one considers matters from the standpoint of the class struggle. The writers of the "manifesto" do not notice these questions, however; for they consider matters from the federalist-nationalist standpoint. And the writers of the "manifesto" have likewise set themselves the goal of aping the Bund in everything. They have also included in their "manifesto" Article 2 of the resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Bund, "On the Position of the Bund in the Party." They characterize the "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers" as the only defender of the interests of the Armenian proletariat (see the article of the manifesto mentioned). The writers of the "manifesto" have forgotten that the Caucasian Committee of our Party has already functioned for several years as the representative of the Armenian (and other) proletarians of the Caucasus; that it has developed class consciousness among them by propaganda and agitation, written and oral, in the Armenian language; that it leads them in struggle, etc., while the "Social-Democratic Organization of the Armenian Workers" only came into being day before yesterday. They have forgotten all this, and it is to be expected that they will forget much more still in their endeavor to duplicate as exactly as possible the organizational and political viewpoints of the Bund.

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Confusion will arise, the class consciousness of the proletariat of Russia will crumble! Instead of destroying national barriers, we shall, by the grace of the Federalists, strengthen them still more by adding organizational barriers; instead of advancing the class consciousness of the proletariat, we shall retard it and subject it to dangerous trials. And the autocratic tsar "will rejoice in his heart," for he could never have succeeded in winning unpaid aides like us.

Was this, then, our goal?

And, finally, at a time when we need a united, active, centralized party, whose Central Committee could instantaneously set into motion the workers of all Russia and lead them to the decisive storming of the autocracy and the bourgeoisie —at such a time a misshapen "Federalist League," split into separate parties, is placed in our hands! Instead of a sharp weapon, we are given a rusty one and are assured: You are bound to slay your arch-enemies faster with it.

So that is where the Social-Democratic Federalists are leading us!

But since we are not striving for the "strengthening of national barriers," but for their destruction; and since we need not a rusty but a sharp weapon to uproot existing injustices forever; since we wish to bring, not joy but worry, to the foe, and finally put an end to him, therefore it is clear that it is our sacred duty to turn our backs on the Federalists and find a better answer for the solution of the "national question."

We have thus far spoken of the way the "national question" should not be solved. Now we shall speak of the way it must be solved, that is, the way it will be solved by the Social-Democratic Labor Party.*

First of all, it must be remembered that the Social-Democratic Party operating in Russia has called itself the Party of Russia (and not the Russian Party). Obviously, it wished thereby to show that it would bring together under its banner not only the Russian proletarians but also the proletarians of all the nationalities of Russia; and consequently it takes every measure necessary to destroy the national barriers erected between them.

Furthermore, our Party has freed the "national question" from the enveloping mist that gave an air of mystery to this question; it has separated this question into individual elements, given each of them the character of a class demand, and inscribed them in the form of individual articles in the program. It has thereby clearly shown us that the so-called "national interests" and "national demands" in themselves have no value; that these "interests" and "demands" are worthy of attention only in so far as they advance or can advance the class consciousness and class development of the proletariat.

The Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia has by all these acts

* It will not be superfluous to note that the following remarks form a commentary on the clauses of our Party program relating to the national question.

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clearly indicated the road it has taken and the position it has adopted with regard to the solution of the "national question."

What parts constitute the "national question"? What do Messrs. the Social-Democratic Federalists demand?

1. "Civil equality for the nationalities of Russia"?

You are aroused by the civil inequality prevailing in Russia! You want to give back to the nationalities of Russia the civil rights of which they were robbed by the government, and therefore demand civil equality for these nationalities? Now, as for us, are we in any way against this demand? We well understand the great importance of civil rights for the proletarians. Civil rights are a weapon in the struggle: To take away these rights is to take away weapons; and without weapons, as who doesn't know, the proletariat cannot fight effectively. For the proletariat of Russia, however, it is indispensable that the proletarians of all nationalities of Russia shall fight well, since the more strongly these proletarians fight, the more class consciousness will they acquire, and the greater their class consciousness, the stronger will be the class unity of the proletariat of Russia. Yes, we know all that and therefore we struggle with all our might for the civil equality of the nationalities of Russia and will fight for it! Just read Article 7 of our Party program, in which the Party speaks of the "full equality of rights of all citizens, without distinction as to sex, religion, race and nationality," and you will see that the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia undertakes to realize this demand.

What else do the Social-Democratic Federalists demand?

2. "Freedom of language for the nationalities of Russia"?

You are aroused by the fact that it is practically forbidden to the proletarians of the "alien" nationalities of Russia to be taught in their mother tongue, to speak their mother tongue in public, state and other institutions? Indeed, there is reason enough for being aroused! Language is a means for development and for struggle. The different nations have different languages. The interests of the proletariat of Russia require that the proletarians of the nationalities of Russia shall enjoy the full right to use the particular language in which they can develop more freely and struggle better against their enemies at meetings, in public, state and other institutions. This language is acknowledged to be the mother tongue. The proletarians of the "alien" nationalities are robbed of their mother tongue; can we possibly remain silent—you say. Now, what answer does our Party program give to the proletariat of Russia? Read Article 8 of our Party program, in which our Party demands: "The right of the population to receive education in their mother tongue, guaranteed by the establishment of the schools necessary thereto at the expense of the state and the self-governing bodies; the right of every citizen to employ his mother tongue in meetings; the introduction of the mother tongue on

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the basis of equality with the state language in all local, public and state institutions." Read it and you will be convinced by it that the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia undertakes also to realize this demand.

What else do the Social-Democratic Federalists demand?

3. "Self-government for the nationalities of Russia"?

You want to say thereby that the selfsame laws cannot be applied in the same way in the various territories of the Russian State, which differ from one another in the special character of their forms of existence and in the composition of their population? You want these territories to be granted the right to adapt the general state laws to the special character of their forms of existence? If this is so, if this is the content of your demand, then it must be given a corresponding form. Nationalist mistiness and confusion must be dispelled and things must be called by their right names. If you follow this advice, then you will be convinced that we hold nothing against this demand. For us it is self-evident that the various territories of the Russian State which differ from one another in the special character of their forms of life and in the composition of their population cannot apply the state constitution in the same way; it is necessary that these territories shall be given the right to apply the general state constitution in that form from which they will draw greater advantage and in which the existing political forces of the people will develop more strongly. This is required by the class interests of the proletariat of Russia. And if you re-read Article 3 of our Party program, in which our Party demands "wide local self-government, territorial self-government for the areas which differ in special forms of life and in the composition of the population," you will see that the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia was the first to clear this demand of nationalist mist and that it undertook to carry it out.

4. You refer us to tsarist autocracy, which brutally persecutes the national culture of the "alien" nationalities of Russia; which interferes criminally in their internal life and oppresses them from all sides; which has barbarously destroyed the cultural institutions of the Finns (and is still destroying them), which has despoiled the national wealth of Armenia, etc.? You demand guarantees against the brigand acts of violence by the autocracy? And as for us, do we not see the acts of violence of tsarist autocracy? Have we not constantly fought against these acts of violence? At this time it is obvious to everyone that the present government of Russia oppresses and throttles the "alien" nationalities of Russia. It is likewise beyond doubt that this policy of the government, day in and day out, is demoralizing the class consciousness of the proletariat of Russia and subjecting it to dangerous trials. Hence, we shall always and everywhere struggle against the disintegrating policy of tsarist autocracy. Hence, we shall always and everywhere defend not only the useful but also the useless

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institutions of these nationalities against autocracy's police violence, since the interests of the proletariat of Russia lead to the recognition that only the nationalities themselves have the right to destroy or to develop one or another aspect of their national culture. But read Article 9 of our program. Is there not mention of this in Article 9 of our Party program, which, incidentally, has aroused much discussion among our foes as well as friends?

But at this point we are interrupted and counseled not to speak further of Article 9. Why? we ask. "Because," we are told, "this Article of our program fundamentally contradicts Articles 3, 7 and 8 of the same program"; for if the nationalities are given the right to settle their national affairs as they themselves best see fit (see Article 9), then this leaves no room in the mentioned program for Articles 3, 7 and 8; and, vice versa, if these Articles remain in the program, then undoubtedly Article 9 must be stricken from the program. The *Sakartvelo** no doubt speaks with similar intent when, with its own characteristic lightmindedness, it asks: "Where is the logic, if one says to a nation: I give you territorial government, while at the same time reminding it that it has the right to settle its national affairs as it sees fit?" (See *Sakartvelo*, No. 9.) A logical contradiction has "obviously" slipped into the program, and to eliminate this contradiction one or another article, or several articles, must "obviously" be stricken out! Yes, they must "unconditionally" be stricken out, for otherwise, as you see, logic itself, in the shape of the illogical *Sakartvelo*, rises to protest.

At this point an ancient tale comes to mind. Once upon a time there lived a "wise anatomist." He was equipped with everything a real anatomist needs; a diploma, premises, instruments, and boundless pretensions. He lacked only one trifle—knowledge of anatomy. Once he was asked whether he would merely explain how the parts of the skeleton which lay strewn on his dissecting table could be put together. This offered our celebrated sage the opportunity to distinguish himself. The "sage" set to work with much ado and great ceremony. But oh, what misfortune! The "sage" had not the haziest idea of anatomy, he did not know how the parts were to be assembled to form a complete skeleton. The poor man labored and sweated, but in vain. When finally everything fell apart in his hands and success was not in sight, he seized some skeleton-parts, tossed them far from him and philosophically abused the "ill-intentioned" persons who allegedly had not placed the right parts of the skeleton on the table for him. The spectators naturally treated the "wise anatomist" with laughter.

A similar "misadventure" has also befallen the *Sakartvelo*. It hit on the idea of analyzing our Party program, but knew neither the con-

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At this point we mention the *Sakartvelo* only for the purpose of more clearly elucidating the content of Article 9. The purpose of the present article lies in a critique of the Social-Democratic Federalists and not of the "Sakartveloists," who differ fundamentally from the former (see Chapter I).

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nection between the individual articles of the program nor what each article individually represented; and now it counsels us "philosophically": Since I cannot understand this and that article of your program, therefore (?!) you must strike it out of your program.

But I have no desire to expose the *Sakartvelo,* ludicrous in any event, to laughter; since the proverb has it: Don't hit a man when he is down. On the contrary, I am even ready to help it with an explanation of our program, although on condition that it (1) admits its abysmal ignorance; (2) that it listens attentively to me, and (3) that it does not wage war on logic.*

The issue is the following: Articles 3, 7 and 8 of our program originated on the basis of *political centralism.* When the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia adopted these articles in its program, it was guided by the consideration that the so-called "final" solution of the "national question," *i.e.,* the liberation of the "alien" nationalities of Russia, is, generally speaking, impossible so long as political rule rests in the hands of the bourgeoisie. There are two reasons for this. First, the present economic developments are gradually building a bridge between the "alien" nationalities and "Russia," are forging an ever stronger bond between them, and are thereby giving rise to amicable feelings on the part of the leading circles of the bourgeoisie of these nationalities, as a result of which the ground is taken from under their strivings for "national liberation." Secondly, the proletariat, *generally speaking,* will not support the so-called movement of "national liberation," since to date every *such* movement has developed in favor of the bourgeoisie and has demoralized and stunted the class consciousness of the proletariat. This general conviction led to the idea of *political centralism* and to Articles 3, 7 and 8 of our Party program, determined by it.

However, this was, as has been said, the *general conception.*

Economic and political conditions may arise in which the leading circles of the bourgeoisie of "alien" nationalities desire "national liberation."

It may also happen that this movement will be necessary for the development of the class consciousness of the proletariat.

How must our Party act in such a case?

Article 9 was placed in our program to meet just such eventualities. In the very anticipation that such conditions are possible, the nationalities are afforded the right by virtue of which they will endeavor to settle their national affairs in accordance with their wishes (for example, to "liberate" themselves completely).

Our Party, the Party which sets itself the goal to be the leader of the struggling proletariat of all Russia, must be armed for such

* I consider it necessary to inform the reader that with its very first issue the *Sakartvelo* declared war on logic as a fetter to be struggled against. The circumstance that the *Sakartvelo* frequently speaks in the name of logic merits no attention, since it does this merely out of lightmindedness and forgetfulness.

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eventualities in the life of the proletariat and must therefore introduce a corresponding article in its program. This is the way every prudent, farsighted Party must act.

Yet it turns out that this meaning of Article 9 leaves the "sages" of the *Sakartvelo* and many other Social-Democratic Federalists dissatisfied. They demand a "categorical," "direct" reply to the question: Is "national independence" advantageous or disadvantageous for the proletariat?*

I am reminded of the Russian metaphysicists of the 'fifties of the past century, who plied the dialecticians of their day with the question as to whether rain was useful or harmful to crops, and demanded a "definitive" answer. It was not difficult for the dialecticians to prove that such a formulation of the question was utterly unscientific, that such questions may be answered differently at different times, that rain is useful in a drought, but useless and even harmful in a rainy period, and that hence it was obvious stupidity to demand a "categorical" answer to this question.

But instances of this sort have not been of use to the *Sakartvelo!*

In like manner, the adherents of Bernstein demanded of the Marxists just such a "categorical" answer to the question as to whether cooperatives (*i.e.*, consumers' and producers' cooperatives) were useful or harmful to the proletariat. It was not difficult for the Marxists to demonstrate the fatuity of posing questions in this manner; they declared simply that everything depends on time and place, that where the class consciousness of the proletariat has reached the requisite level of development, where the proletarians are united in a strong political party, cooperatives can be of great use to the proletariat, if the party itself undertakes the formation and leadership of the cooperatives; but that where these conditions are lacking, cooperatives may be harmful to the proletariat, since they create shop-keeper tendencies and guild-exclusiveness, and thus distort class consciousness.

But neither was this example of use to the "Sakartveloists." They inquire still more doggedly: Is national independence useful or harmful to the proletariat? Answer categorically!

But we see that the conditions which could produce and develop a "national liberation" movement among the bourgeoisie of the "alien" nationalities are first of all absent and are indeed not so inevitable in the future. We merely assumed them as possible. Besides, it is for the time being impossible to know what stage of development the class consciousness of the proletariat will have reached, and how useful or harmful this movement will be to the proletariat. The point is: what actual basis is there for a "categorical" answer to this question to be presented,* whence shall it be derived? And is it not therefore downright folly, in such a state

* See the article of the "Old [*i.e.*, *antiquated*] Revolutionary" in No. 9 of the *Sakartvelo*.

* Messrs. the "Sakartveloists" always build their demands upon sand and simply cannot conceive that there are people who can find for their demands a firmer basis.

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of affairs, to demand a "categorical" answer?

It is clear that the solution of this question must be left to the "alien" nationalities themselves; but we must secure for them the right to solve this question. The nationalities shall themselves decide, as soon as it is required of them, whether "national independence" is useful or harmful to them and, in the event that it is useful, in what form it shall be realized. They alone can decide this question! Thus, the "alien" nationalities are granted by Article 9 the right to settle their national affairs in accordance with their wishes. We, however, are obligated by the same article to work so that the desires of these nationalities shall be truly Social-Democratic, that these wishes shall proceed from the class interests of the proletariat. For this, however, it is necessary to enlighten the proletarians of these nationalities in the Social-Democratic spirit, to subject certain reactionary "national" mores, customs, and institutions to strong Social-Democratic criticism, which will not at all prevent us from defending these mores, customs, and institutions against police violence. This is the basic idea of Article 9.

It is easy to grasp what a profound and logical connection exists between this article of our program and the principles of the proletarian class struggle. And since our entire program is built upon this principle, the logical connection of Article 9 with all the other articles of our Party program is of itself clear.

The dull-witted *Sakartvelo* is therefore called a "profound" paper precisely because it cannot digest such simple ideas.

What still remains of the "national question"?

5. "Defense of the national spirit and its attributes"?

What is this "national spirit and its attributes"? Science has long ago proved by dialectical materialism that there does not and cannot exist any "national spirit." Has this conception of dialectical materialism been refuted by anyone? History tells us that this conception has not been refuted by anyone. Hence we are obligated to accept the stated conception of science and to repeat with science that there does not and cannot exist any "national spirit." This being so, if there is no "national spirit," then it is evident that any defense of that which is nonexistent is logical nonsense, which inevitably must bring in its wake corresponding historical (undesirable) results. To chatter of such "philosophical" inanity is most becoming to the *Sakartvelo*, "organ of the Revolutionary Party of the Georgian Social-Federalists" (see *Sakartvelo* No. 9).*

* What does this party, which gives itself such a peculiar name, really represent? *Sakartvelo* reports (see first supplement to No. 10 of the *Sakartvelo*) that "in the spring of this year Georgian revolutionaries met abroad: Georgian anarchists, adherents of the *Sakartvelo*, Georgian Social-Revolutionaries . . . and united . . . into the 'Party' of the Georgian Socialists-Federalists." Yes, precisely Anarchists, who heartily despise all politics; Social-Revolutionaries, who apotheosize politics; "Sakartveloists," who reject all terrorist and Anarchist measures—such a variegated and mutually negating company has united into a — "Party"! An ideal motley crew, as one can only imagine! Certainly, there will be no boredom here! Mistaken are those organizers who hold that commonalty of principles is necessary to unite people into a party! Not common principles, we are told by this variegated company, but lack of principles, is the

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The "national question" is exhausted! Our Party has dismembered it into its individual parts, has drawn out of it the life-flow and distributed it through the veins of our program, showing thereby that the solution of the "national question" lies in Social-Democracy, so that national barriers shall be destroyed, without our departing for even a moment from our cherished principles.

Why, it may be asked, do we need separate national parties? Or, where is that Social-Democratic "basis" upon which the organizational and political positions of the Social-Democratic Federalists shall be built? Such a "basis" is not to be found, it does not exist. The Social-Democratic Federalists hang in mid-air.

They can free themselves from this uncomfortable position in two ways. They must either finally abandon the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat and adopt the principle of strengthening national barriers (opportunism in federalist form), or they must reject all federalism in the party organization, boldly raise the banner of the destruction of national barriers and unite with the camp of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia.

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basis upon which a "Party" ought to be built! Away with "theory," principles are slavery-chains! The quicker we free ourselves from them, the better, philosophizes this motley crew. And in fact, as soon as these people freed themselves of principles, they built at once, with one stroke . . . a house of cards—*Pardon*—the "Party of the Georgian Social-Federalists." "Seven and a half men" can now found a party at any time, once they get together. And should we not laugh when these ignoramuses, these "officers" without an army, begin to philosophize: The Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia is "anti-socialist, reactionary," etc., the Russian Social-Democrats are "chauvinists," the Caucasian League of our Party "slavishly" subordinates itself to the Central Committee of the Party (I must emphasize that the coordinated activities of individual sections of the Party appear to certain abnormal "individuals" as "slavish subordination." This all comes from nervous debility, say the doctors.), etc. (See the Resolutions of the First Conference of the Georgian Revolutionaries.) Nothing better was to be expected from these archæological relics of Bakunin's times. A tree is known by its fruit; a factory by its products. This, in brief, is the visage of the bourgeois-nationalist party of the variegated company.

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THE "SOCIALISM" OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

BY H. A. GEORGE

WHEN asked by the Independent Labor Party in 1920: "In what respect does Communism differ from other forms of socialism?" the Communist International replied in a famous document: "There are no other forms. There is only communism. Whatever else goes under the name of socialism is either wilful deception by the lackeys of the bourgeoisie or the self-delusion of persons or groups who hesitate to choose between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; who hesitate between a life and death struggle and the role of assistants to the expiring bourgeoisie." The aim of these pages is to outline the basic character of international Social-Democracy as revealed in the twenty years that have passed between the two great wars of modern imperialist society.

It is not proposed here to recall in detail how the development of capitalism into its stage of monopoly, of imperialism, with the growing tension of its internal and external contradictions leading to the first imperialist World War (1914-18), involved the collapse of the old Second International. The essential thing for us at this stage is to remember how opportunism and departure from revolutionary principle had so corroded the Socialist International that in August, 1914, all its leading sections abandoned their internationalism and substituted the cry: "Workers of all countries, cut each other's throats in defense of your Fatherland" for Marx's "Workers of all countries, unite." Upon the old International there reposed the clear obligation laid down and accepted at its congresses in Basle and Stuttgart that "if, nevertheless, war breaks out it is their duty to work for its speedy termination and to strive with all their might to utilize the economic and political crisis produced by the war to rouse the political consciousness of the masses of the people and thereby hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule." The betrayal of that pledge sounded the death knell of the Second International, rendering inevitable a split and the subsequent new grouping of the forces of consistent revolutionary Socialism, under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in the Communist International.

The general crisis of world capitalism engendered by the war of 1914, the Russian Revolution and the collapse of Central and Eastern

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Europe in 1918-19 revealed very clearly that the "socialism" of the majority of the old Socialist International meant this, and only this—to assist mortally stricken capitalist society to gain a new lease of life at the expense of the working class. This meant combating any development towards socialism, that is to say, the achievement of working class power, in their own countries and using every weapon, from slander to armed attack, upon the country where the working class had assumed power and was in a position to proceed to the construction of a socialist society.

If we take the three main periods of development since 1918, we shall see how Social-Democracy has been consistent, internationally, in its collaboration with the ruling class of its own countries ("assisting the expiring bourgeoisie"), in its hostility to the socialist Soviet Union, in its persistent refusal to participate in any united front of the working class against the menace of fascism and war.

The Post-War Revolutionary Period

In the immediate post-war revolutionary period Germany was the key problem; and the story of the responsibility of the Majority Social-Democratic leaders for the defeat of the German Revolution is well known. We have the famous admission of Karl Kautsky himself that the German workers and soldiers had power in their hands and that the Social-Democratic leaders proceeded to hand power back to the Junkers and the bourgeoisie. This, as we know, involved that ruthless slaughter of thousands upon thousands of German working men with which the names of such Social-Democratic leaders as Noske and Scheidemann will be forever associated in infamy. The present generation may not know how the name, "Majority Social-Democrat" stank throughout the world labor movement in those days. The attempt to revive the old International, which was begun by the Berne Conference in 1919, was too much for the stomachs of many who were far from being consistent revolutionaries; and the resuscitated corpse was no more than an uneasy association of the German and British Right wing, its principal protagonist in England being none other than Ramsay MacDonald. A general view was expressed by Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P., at the Scarborough Conference of the Labor Party in 1920, when he said:

"The Second International had participated in the crimes of capitalism ever since the Armistice. It had outraged Labor ideals and was merely an International of words and no value to this or any other country. It could not exist without the British Labor movement."

Abandonment of the working class struggle against capitalism, and complete adjustment to the policy of their own ruling class, was the platform of the revived Second International and its successor, the Labor and Socialist International, formed at the Hamburg Congress of 1923 by the absorption of the phrasemongers of the Centrist Two-and-a-Half International after they had performed their function of

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deflecting for a space the trend to Communism. The Geneva Congress in 1920 had described, in familiar terms, the International's aim of "socialization" as a "gradual process" with compensation for the capitalists and had asserted that parliamentary democracy must be the political system of socialism, with Parliament representing "the community as a whole." Nothing new, of course; but how this worked out in practice was seen in the direct alliance of Social-Democracy with the regime in many of the smaller countries where White Terror had succeeded in overthrowing revolutionary governments. In Hungary, for example, the Social-Democratic Party concluded a written agreement with Premier Bethlen in which it was laid down that "the Social-Democratic Party will consider the general interests of the nation as of equal importance to the interests of the working class," that they "will carry on an active propaganda on behalf of Hungary . . . and for this purpose will cooperate with the Hungarian Foreign Ministry," and that in their newspaper *Nepszava* they will "adopt an impartial attitude and loyally express in this paper collaboration with bourgeois society." When subsequently the terms of this agreement became known and the scandal was such that even the Second International had to appoint a Commission of Enquiry (which, under Kautsky, duly whitewashed the Hungarian Social-Democrats), the point was made by the Hungarian semi-official *Neues Pester Journal* that the agreement "does not contain anything which every Socialist Party of the world—if we disregard the Third International—would not have recognized, or at least realized by its practical attitude."

This line worked out most significantly in regard to the Versailles Treaty, the problems of reparations, and so on. While the Communist International immediately (on May 13, 1919) denounced Versailles as "a brigand peace," which threatened to crush the German working class between the double yoke of its own rulers and the imperialists of the Entente, who were shown to be "in fact trying to impose their hegemony over all the nations of Europe," the Second International made no serious opposition at all. It could not, because it could not seriously oppose the victorious imperialists, particularly those of Britain and America, upon whose intervention depended the possibility of the reconstruction of capitalism in Germany. So their policy in the matter of the peace treaties and reparations was "far behind that of intelligent West European Liberals," as a Communist International delegation said in 1922.

At the Hamburg Congress the resolution on this matter was a fumbling piece of patchwork which was only distinguished from the reparations policy of the Baldwin government in Britain in some secondary details. Here was no stand against the treaty as such; only a humble plea for some degree of revision. Here was no stand against reparations; only begging that they should be adjusted to Germany's capacity to pay. And because there

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was a conflict in this matter between British imperialism and French, between Baldwin and Poincaré, so the French Social-Democrats stood up at Hamburg to defend *their* bourgeoisie against their comrades. Léon Blum protested that the Versailles Treaty was not as oppressive as the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 or the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713; and, with the thunder of the Ruhr occupation over Europe, he defended French militarism ("old and glorious traditions") and French chauvinism (which was, he said, a mistaken way of conceiving French "national pride").

So spoke the leaders of the Labor and Socialist International (L.S.I.) when Germany, crashing through inflation and economic ruin, stood on the eve of revolution; when the workers' government was established in Saxony and Hitler led his putsch in Munich. It was the Communist International alone which, that August, set forth the issues of the struggle and urged the need for immediate international unity to help the German workers repel fascism, to organize full solidarity with them in their fight against their own capitalists and the Anglo-French imperialists, to defend the German revolution against foreign intervention and thus to further the fight for peace. This call for united action was dispatched to the L.S.I. It evoked no response. Instead, the whole force of international Social-Democracy was swung behind the Dawes Plan, that notorious scheme of Wall Street and the City to save derelict German economy for capitalism by applying the healing balm of Anglo-American capital investment, turning Germany into a semi-colony and flinging new burdens upon the already horribly overburdened German working class.

Support for Counter-Revolution

Here we may turn to consider the anti-Soviet policy of the L.S.I., as evidenced at this stage. The principal role here was played by those same leaders of German Social-Democracy who had shown themselves the most willing tools of reaction in their own country. It was they who patronized, and subsidized, the Menshevik émigrés—the tribe of Dan and Abramovich, those political bankrupts who had degenerated into open counter-revolutionaries and were regularly trotted forth at international gatherings to spit venom against the growing power of the workers' republic. These miserable creatures were invariably responsible for drafting congress resolutions on the U.S.S.R. and engaging in general anti-Soviet hack work under L.S.I. auspices. In this way the Hamburg Congress —where resolutions of protest about Georgia were trotted out, though there was never a resolution of sympathy with the oppressed peoples of Egypt or India, then very much in the news—was made a very sinister demonstration against the October Revolution.

Those who may imagine that denunciation of the Soviet regime by "Socialists" is something new should look back at the early efforts of the L.S.I. Thus in 1925 they pub-

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lished (in German) a work by Abramovich and Company entitled, *The Terror Against the Socialist Parties in Russia and Georgia.* As a vicious attack without limit on the Soviet regime this performance may be commended as the father of all the lies that are repeddled in our own day by renegades and adventurers of all sorts. In the same year the L.S.I. report indicated that the work of the Russian Social-Democrats included illegal activity in the U.S.S.R., where they had a secret printing press. This background of violent hostility to, and secret conspiracy against, the Soviet regime explained the vehemence of the assault that was always launched upon any demonstration that the U.S.S.R. was a workers' state, any plea for unity between the Soviet labor movement and the movements in other countries. The principal example of this was the colossal barrage of lies and ill-will that was directed by the whole of Continental Social-Democracy and its press against the British Trades Union Congress General Council in 1925. That was because the General Council's delegation to Moscow had returned to proclaim that "in Russia the working class is the ruling class" and further urged the need for international trade union unity, including the Russians. To the L.S.I. this was indeed anathema, and every method of propaganda and intrigue was used to discredit the British General Council and, through the Social-Democratic control of the International Federation of Trade Unions, to dish their campaign for unity.

"Succumbing to Prosperity"

Perhaps even more revealing of the gulf that separated this "Socialist" International from socialism was its line during the second post-war period, that of temporary capitalist stabilization. It could be said of the L.S.I. leadership generally, as Professor Erich Roll has written specifically of the German Social-Democrats, that they "succumbed to the apparent prosperity of the years 1924-29. They accepted the growth of monopoly as a step forward in the direction of socialism. They developed the theory of organized capitalism as a substitute for their previous analysis of the economic system." Social-Democratic delegations journeyed across the Atlantic to return and proclaim that Ford had supplanted Marx, that the American "high wages" policy (!) was the guiding star for the working class. This blind and baseless belief in the permanence of capitalist prosperity contrasted throughout with the sober analysis of the Communist International, which noted in its program (adopted at the Sixth World Congress in 1928) that "the stabilization achieved by the repression of the working class and the systematic depression of its standard of life can only be a partial, transient and decaying stabilization"; and which added at its Tenth Plenum (July, 1929), that, despite Social-Democratic prophecies, stabilization was more and more undermined, and leading inevitably to new imperialist wars, to great class conflicts, to an upward swing of the revolutionary movement, and to new

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anti-imperialist revolutions in colonial countries. Who can now doubt which view was the right one?

What a contrast, too, on the big questions of *empire;* the Communist International associated itself fully with the League Against Imperialism, established in 1927 as the most representative association of colonial peoples ever assembled; the L.S.I. not only turned all its fire against the League, but at its Brussels Congress in 1928—where there was no colonial representation—adumbrated a colonial policy so imperialist, so denying the principle of self-determination that the few, and moderate, colonial guests present were driven to raise an uproar. And as for the threat of *war,* that same L.S.I. Congress did no more than rubber-stamp the policy of the Anglo-French League of Nations, the policy of Locarno and the Kellogg Pact (the French delegates taking the opportunity to add fuel to the Nazi flames by urging that the unconditional evacuation of the Rhineland was "not immediately practicable"). Yet while Social-Democracy was thus whitewashing the war plans of the imperialists, capitalism's "historical fate drives it once again with tremendous elemental force into the vortex of tremendous catastrophes, the deadly breath of which will scorch the whole world." (Manifesto of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.) The L.S.I. and its parties deceived the workers with the myth that 1914-18 was the "last" war. Lenin had written in November, 1914, that "this war, if there does not follow a series of successful revolutions, will soon be followed by another war," and the Communist International proclaimed in 1929 that:

"The furious struggle for markets, for sources of raw material, for the export of capital and spheres of investment is inevitably leading to war among the great imperialist powers for the expansion of economic territory at each other's expense, to war for the redistribution of the world. . . . By rejecting the proposal of the U.S.S.R. for real universal disarmament the League of Nations exposed itself as an instrument in the preparation of war. . . . The rapid increase of armaments in the imperialist countries and the establishment of new military and political alliances (England-France, England-Japan, France-Poland, etc.), are further evidence of the approaching new imperialist war—a war more gigantic, more destructive than the war of 1914-18." (Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.)

To which type of analysis the L.S.I. could only reply by attacking the Communists "for directing the thought and hopes of the workers towards new wars," an observation as empty and stupid as its intention was slanderous.

Capitalist World Crisis, Fascism and War

The onset of the capitalist world crisis in 1929-30, phophesied by the Communists, filled blind-eyed Social-Democracy with astonishment and horror; and this opening of the third post-war period (or direct

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pre-war period) found these singular "Socialists" shouting loud and clear that their main purpose was —as before—to restore capitalism. Said the German Social-Democrats at their Leipzig Congress (1931): "We must be the physicians of ailing capitalism." Said the late Emile Vandervelde, chairman of the L.S.I., "the capitalist system is cracking in all its parts. It can only be saved by serious and urgent measures. We are at the eleventh hour. Take care that the proletariat, like Samson, does not bring crashing down the columns of the temple." (May, 1932.) In Germany the situation was steadily deteriorating, both in an economic and a political sense; the Reichstag elections of 1930 had shown a vast and sinister accretion of fascist strength. What did the L.S.I. propose? Its congress at Vienna in 1931 gave the answer—a plea for "generous international credit action" to prevent German economic collapse *(i.e.,* going round with the hat, as in 1924, to foreign imperialism to help German capitalism out of a jam); there was not a word of the prime necessity of united working class action against fascism; on the contrary, the fascists and Communists were falsely bracketed together as those who equally recommended the "scrapping by violence" of the Versailles Treaty.

Germany in those opening crisis years was the final test of the policy of international Social-Democracy. The powerful German section of the L.S.I. proved themselves only too deserving of the title "Social-Fascists" (as the Communists called them), since they "restrain the workers from revolutionary action against the capitalist offensive and growing fascism, play the part of a screen behind which the fascists are able to organize their forces, and build the road for the fascist dictatorship." (Twelfth Plenum of the Communist International, 1932.) The fatal policy of collaboration with capitalism, of fusion with the state machine, of ossification of the union; the identification of the Social-Democratic leaders with the most reactionary governments of post-war Germany (Bruening, Papen) on the plea that they were a "lesser evil" to Hitler; all this compromised them hopelessly in the eyes of the masses, and reduced a vast labor movement to impotence. No fewer than four urgent calls from the German Communists for united action were summarily rejected or ignored. The Hitler coup was accepted without a fight, and the Social-Democratic leaders actually sought accommodation with the Nazi regime—voting for it in the Reichstag—while their trade union colleagues expressed their "willingness to cooperate in the work of the Hitlerist state." *(The Times.)* The shock throughout the world labor movement was such that even Paul Faure had to write "fascism is installed in Germany. By forgetting socialism, by forgetting the class struggles, our comrades permitted this to happen."

Between 1933 and September 1939 an age stretches; but here we can dispose of it summarily. The disappearance of German Social-Democracy meant that the L.S.I.

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now had only two major parties left, those of Britain and France; and the policy of the L.S.I. became more and more a reflection of the policies of the ruling groups in those two countries, especially (because of its dominant role) of Britain. The Communist International stressed that the policy of British imperialism, in supporting German rearmament and "aiming to turn the spearhead of German armaments from the West to the East and to direct Germany's aggressiveness against the Soviet Union" was "one of the factors accelerating the outbreak of world imperialist war." (Seventh Congress, 1935.) But the L.S.I. remained passive, unmoved by the Communist International's call for a united people's front to fight for peace and against the instigators of war.

When the Spanish Republic was fighting for its life against fascist aggression the L.S.I. was full of sympathy; but it shuffled around the desperate appeal of its own Spanish section, urging it to meet the Communist International to concert a united campaign for Spain; when the P.O.U.M. gangsters and traitors were belatedly brought to trial it dispatched a minatory telegram to the Spanish Government, in effect intervening on behalf of the P.O.U.M.; and its two leading parties, as is well-known, were the arch-protagonists of "non-intervention."

Towards Czechoslovakia and Munich the L.S.I. attitude can only be described as Chamberlainite; thus its secretariat report for 1938 wrote literally: "Through the Munich agreement Hitler was forced provisionally to content himself with a partial success . . . but he still worked towards the completion of his original plan" and in March, 1939, "openly violated the Munich agreement." Language precisely paralleled by Mr. Chamberlain's apologies. And, finally, recording the liquidation of its Czech party the report concluded that "the L.S.I. can only adopt a waiting attitude."

That is an apt thought for a conclusion. The "Socialists" who have scuttled socialism "adopt a waiting attitude"—waiting in the bourgeois ante-chamber until they can get a chance to rush into open union with the most reactionary, most jingo, most fascist-tending forces. As, in the crisis of the second imperialist World War, they have done by their union with Reynaud-Daladier-Mandel-Marin-Ybarnegaray in France, with Churchill-Chamberlain-Halifax-Lloyd-Duff Cooper in Britain. Offering the working class a British or French version of none other than "National-Socialism," plus an unequalled anti-Soviet incitement as the Finnish war showed; but the working class needs "peace, bread and freedom," as the Communist International's May Day manifesto put it, needs "a popular front of the working people, established from below by the masses" to achieve those aims. It is evident that such a fighting front can only be forged by relentless struggle against the "International of Socialist Betrayal."

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ASPECTS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

BY FRANK MEYER

IN THESE days when the whole structure of capitalist society, rotting away at its foundations, has entered another period of war-crisis and catastrophe, it is to be expected that the utter bankruptcy of the science and thought of the parasitic and degenerate "thinkers" of imperialism will be exhibited more clearly than ever.

Particularly when they make any attempt to analyze the forces of society, the direction and movement of history, the significance of the events of our own time, the philosophers and statesmen of bourgeois society descend to bloodthirsty, chauvinistic ravings or childish, mystical fairy tales.

What explanations of history they offer us! To the barbarous tribal medicine-man school of Hitler there is now added the new cult of "blood and race" of Churchill and the British Ministry of Information, and the fomenting of the same type of chauvinism as a guide to public policy in the United States.

All history, it seems, is the working out of the "blood urge of the German people." The only problem arises when history is also the working out of the "blood urge of the Anglo-Saxon people."

From such reductions to absurdity the liberal and Social-Democratic servants of imperialism recoil. Not because of any deep-seated loyalty to science and truth. Not at all. Indeed, they play their part in building up these myths of "race." But a certain division of labor is necessary.

Thus we have a multitude of "interpretations" of events. There is, for instance, the "psychological" school of history, of which a prize contribution appeared recently in the *Chicago Daily News* under the signature of M. W. Fodor, the great liberal "authority" on European affairs, explaining that "the foundations for Belgium's utter failure to check the initial onslaught of the Nazi invaders" are to be found, where do you suppose?—"in the schools of England" where King Leopold, "timid from infancy—unhappily spent the World War years as a refugee from his embattled homeland. Disliked by his schoolmates, he was forced to endure such constant bullying that its effects have been apparent ever since—and have manifested themselves particularly in a bitter hatred for the English." Through such magnificent plumbing of the depths of the basic forces which determine modern history, Mr. Fodor further

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reveals that: "Moreover, a wealthy German baroness, who visited Leopold twice weekly in recent years [Wednesdays and Fridays] contributed notably toward the encouragement of his Nazi sympathies."

The bankruptcy of this method of historical interpretation consists in its choosing one narrow, secondary factor and elevating it into a decisive principle. "These learned flunkies of the bourgeoisie" avoid like the plague any approach to an understanding of the real laws of the movement of society. Movement, development, growth, "the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born," is a dangerous idea for capitalism. As in the presence of some old ladies and old gentlemen death is never mentioned, so it is bad taste to talk of real change in the cloisters of the bourgeois universities or the palaces of bourgeois statesmen.

The fruit of their blindness is the impotence of their science. The criterion of the science of society, like the criterion of all science, is its ability to guide action, to predict the general course of development on the basis of a study of the past and present and of the laws of change.

Today Marxism Leninism alone possesses such power of prediction; it alone is theoretically in a position to "understand the inner connection of current events, to foresee their course and to perceive not only how and in what direction they are developing in the present, but how and in what direction they are bound to develop in the future."

Remember the time of Munich. The press of all the capitalist countries saw two lessons from Munich, and the learned professors saw the same two lessons: peace was established in Europe "for a generation"; and, with the triumph of the umbrella policy, the Soviet Union was isolated and powerless in world affairs.

Comrade Stalin saw things in a different way. Speaking of Munich and "appeasement" in his speech to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in March, 1939, he said:

"Far be it from me to moralize on the policy of non-intervention, talk of treason, treachery and so on. It would be naive to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics is politics, as the old, case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. *It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them.*" (*From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, p. 15. International Publishers, 1939. My emphasis—*F.M.*)*

History has indeed proved who was right. The progress of events has shown once again the utter bankruptcy of bourgeois thought even in matters of life-and-death importance to the capitalist class, and the brilliant power of Marxism in the hands of so great a master as Stalin.

An understanding of the princi-

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ples of historical materialism is of the greatest importance to every class-conscious worker, who must be able to dig beneath surface appearances and thoroughly understand the basic forces at work in the epochal days in which we live.

The possibility of this understanding is not limited to a narrow group of specialized people. The method of historical materialism, of Marxist science, can be mastered by every worker who has the will and the desire for that understanding. The *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* in particular, provides us with an unsurpassed guide. Not only the book as a whole, but especially the second section of the fourth chapter, written by Comrade Stalin, forms the basis for the attainment of a clear and thorough grasp of historical materialism.

* * *

What is the source from which comes the power of Marxist science applied to society, of historical materialism? What is historical materialism?

The starting point of historical materialism is the study of society as it is—in constant motion and development. It is the analysis of the basic laws which in actual life work themselves out in the form of a million seemingly disconnected and accidental events.

Historical materialism rejects all unscientific, mystical explanations from outside of the world—"the will of God," "the spirit of the race," "the inscrutable working out of the development of the idea of freedom." It rejects any strait-jacketed concept within which so-called philosophers of history attempt to cram the living reality, the rich variety in life of human society.

"It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or abstract definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions." (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology,* p. 15.)

It imposes upon the world no "laws" created in the seclusion of a cloistered study.

It is first of all, therefore, a historical science based upon the materialist world outlook. It is thorough-going materialism.

The world outlook of materialism asserts:

". . . that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, mind, and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain, and the brain is the organ of thought." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* p. 112.)

Therefore, materialism no more looks for the explanation of history in the independent development of some mystical principle, of some "idea" of truth, or beauty, or goodness, than the physicist looks for an understanding of the principles which make possible the building of an airplane in the "idea" of fly-

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ing or in some ancient Greek myth about a flying man. As the latter looks for these principles in practice, in the physical world all about him, so the materialist social scientist looks for the principles which explain the motion of society *in society.*

Since the ideas in men's minds are secondary, are derived from the world of material existence, it is in the material existence of men, not in their ideas *about* this existence, that we must, first of all, look for an understanding of society.

"Hence the source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the *conditions of the material life of society,* in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection." (*Ibid.,* p. 115. My emphasis—*F.M.*)

This is why *The Communist Manifesto,* proclaiming the gulf between Marxist materialist thought and all previous, utopian socialism, stated:

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

"They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

Historical materialism takes as its foundation the statement of Marx:

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works,* Vol. I, p. 356.)

Therefore, in the study of history, we must first investigate the foundations of "social being"; we must determine the basic character of men's social existence if we wish to discover the general laws of society, the laws which give us understanding of social movement, which bring into perspective the millionfold apparently meaningless "accidents."

* * *

What is the foundation of social existence, the foundation upon which arises the multifarious life of mankind, the mental and spiritual life of society?

Before everything else and as a basis for everything else they do, men must live. To live they must produce from nature the wherewithal to eat, to clothe and shelter themselves. This, which is the starting point of human society, is the solid foundation upon which arises the whole complex structure of civilized life.

But man does not live alone, isolated, like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island. He comes into existence a social being. His history is the history of society. He may live as part of the family, the clan, the tribe, the slave latifundia and the cities of slave antiquity, the feudal

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manor, or the world society of our time; *but he always lives as part of some social group.* The production of his means of livelihood is *social production,* whether it is production of the bare and simple needs of primitive society or the complex requirements of today.

". . . the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which *determines* the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another . . . [is] the *method of procuring the means of life* necessary for human existence, the *mode of production of material values*—food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc.—which are indispensable for the life of development of society." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* p. 119.)

The understanding of the mode of production, of the laws that determine its development, is the understanding of the chief force in the development of society.

Production is based, first of all, on the *productive forces* of society: the instruments of production with which men work and the men themselves, their production experience and labor skill.

"The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means they find in existence and have to reproduce." (*The German Ideology,* p. 7.)

The instruments of production, a wooden plow or a steel combine, the simple tools of a feudal wheelwright or the complex machines of a modern factory, these grow and develop, and with them grow and develop the production experience and the labor skill of society.

But this is only one aspect of the mode of production.

Production is social production; and in one way or another men must enter into relations among themselves in order to produce. They must enter into different relations to utilize the different instruments and skill they possess with the changes and development of the productive forces.

These relations, which Marx termed the *relations of production,* form another aspect of the mode of production. Together with the forces of production, they make up a unity, the unity expressed in labor itself, in the application of man's labor power to nature. This unity is the mode of production.

The labor of human beings in this mutual process of production becomes divided, allotted, in one way or another as the process of production goes on. The division of labor takes place in different ways with the different forces available.

"Each new productive force . . . brings about a further development of the division of labor. . . . The various stages of development in the division of labor are just so many different forms of ownership, *i.e.,* the existing stage in the division of labor determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labor." (*Ibid.,* pp. 8-9.)

"[For] . . . the mass of products corresponding to the different needs

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require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society. That this necessity of distributing social labor in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the *particular form* of social production, but can only change the *form it assumes*, is self evident. No natural laws can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* in which these laws operate." (Marx to Kugelmann, *The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 246.)

History has seen the simple classless relations of primitive society and the more complex relations which develop with the maturing of the division of labor: the relations of slave society, of feudal society, of capitalist society, based upon exploitation; it is beholding on a sixth of the earth the transition toward the new, classless relations of scientific communism. But whatever the *form* of the relations of production, such relations of a definite kind always constitute, together with the productive forces, the definite mode of production of a given time.

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 356.)

For, as Lenin has shown us:

"Never has it been the case, nor is it the case now, that the members of society are aware of the sum-total of the social relations in which they live as something definite, integral, as something pervaded by some principle. On the contrary, the mass of people adapt themselves to these relations unconsciously, and are unaware of them as specific historical social relations; so much so, in fact, that the explanation, for instance, of the relations of exchange, under which people have lived for centuries, was discovered only in very recent times. Materialism has removed this contradiction by carrying the analysis deeper, to the very origin of these social ideas of man; and its conclusion that the course of ideas depends on the course of things is the only deduction compatible with scientific psychology. Moreover, this hypothesis was the first to elevate sociology to the level of a science from yet another aspect. Hitherto, sociologists had found difficulty in distinguishing in the complex network of social phenomena which phenomena were important and which unimportant (that is the root of subjectivism in sociology) and had been unable to discover any objective criterion for such a distinction. Materialism provided an absolutely objective criterion by *singling out the 'relations of production' as the structure of society. . . .*" (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 419.)

This is the great contribution of historical materialism, the discovery that the development of society can be comprehended only on the basis of an understanding of "the conditions of the material life of society" and the revelation of the chief force in the complex of these conditions, the force which "determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the de-

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velopment of society from one system to another."

* * *

Upon the foundation of the mode of production arises the whole complexity of human society.

"The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which corespond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 356.)

The political, religious, philosophical, artistic ideas and institutions of a given society are engendered by the economic basis of that society. "Whatever is man's manner of life, such is his manner of thought."

This can be clearly seen, for example, if we realize that the theories of modern astronomy only became possible with the development of modern technique; or when we consider the dependence of the development of modern biological science upon the economic needs of world-wide expansion of large-scale production; or when we understand how the theory of scientific socialism and the actual political institutions of Soviet society depend for their existence upon the development of socialized production, and would have been completely impossible at, let us say, the feudal level of the mode of production. We express our understanding of this in a popular manner when we say that the ideas and the institutions of the "horse-and-buggy" age are inapplicable to the needs of the airplane age.

* * *

But the mode of production does not stand still. It is always changing and developing. With it also changes and develops the whole of human society. To understand these changes it is necessary to understand the laws of motion of the mode of production.

The power of historical materialism arises from the fact that it is based upon a thoroughgoing materialist world outlook, that is, upon a *dialectical* materialist outlook. Dialectical materialism, unlike metaphysical or mechanical philosophies, recognizes that the world is in constant flow and change, that the world of matter in motion is a connected whole within which all things, processes, are interconnected one with another. It searches for the law of that motion, for the principle of change and development, and discovers it in the eternal conflict of opposites, proceedings not smoothly but by a series of leaps, of revolutionary transformations. It recognizes that:

". . . internal contradictions are inherent in all things in phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is

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being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of a process of development. . . ." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 109.)

This dialectical understanding applied in the realm of history made it possible, for the first time, not only to lay bare the foundations of the structure of society, but also to develop the laws of the motion of society.

"What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method—in contradistinction to the metaphysical method—is nothing more or less than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in regarding society as a living organism in a constant state of development (and not as something mechanically concatenated and therefore permitting any arbitrary combination of individual social elements), the study of which requires an objective analysis of the relations of production that constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 445.)

Marxists, beginning with Marx and Engels themselves, have never carried out this investigation in the abstract. *Capital* represents twenty-five years of work by Karl Marx devoted to a concrete study of a specific system of society, commodity production, in order there, concretely, on the basis of this massive study, to "lay bare," as he himself states its aim, "the economic law of motion of modern society."

What are these laws? How does the mode of production develop?

To begin with,

"its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and, in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 121.)

Such changes as the movement forward from the use of stone instruments to the use of iron instruments, or from the simple tools of the handicraftsman to the large-scale machinery of modern production, are the basic transformations in the development of the mode of production.

With such changes in the forces of production, there arises inevitably a clash between the new productive forces and the old production relations. An organization of society based upon the old, outworn relations of production ceases to be a form through which society and the forces of production of society can develop. It becomes a bar, a hindrance to their further growth. "From forms of development of the forces of production these relationships turn into their fetters." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol I, p. 356.)

The new productive forces, as it were, strive to break through the old relations of production. They demand new relations of production, a new organization of society, in order that they may grow and develop.

For example, with the development of manufacture and then of machine industry, these new forces of production could no longer exist

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within the restricting encirclement of the feudal organization of society, a form of organization based upon more backward forces of production, upon manorial agriculture and handicraft.

". . . the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder. They were burst asunder." (*The Communist Manifesto.*)

Similarly, we live today at a time when the growth of large-scale production, the socialization of production, has come into conflict with the relations of production of capitalism. The fettering of the productive forces, the tremendous intensity of the struggle between those forces and the outmoded relations of production, is exhibited daily and hourly to us in the decay which marks the capitalist system: in the tragic spectacle of great plenty amidst tremendous want; in the deep-going general crisis of capitalism, with all its misery, poverty and horror for humantiy; in the imperialist wars which in their ferociousness and bestiality characterize the death agonies of the capitalist relations of production; in the world-shaking battle between the young and powerful working class and the parasitical monopoly capitalists, which reflects the titanic struggle between the new, powerful socialized forces of production, and the reactionary old and decayed capitalist production relations.

* * *

Upon the foundation of the existing relations of production there rises a vast superstructure of political, social, and cultural ideas and institutions. These forms of consciousness, which depend for their being upon the continuation of the existing relations of production, have in every class society served as weapons of class domination and as ideologies designed to perpetuate the exploitative production relations.

But among the forces of production seeking liberation from the restricting production relations of decadent capitalism is the revolutionary proletariat—"of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power." (Marx.) It becomes the historic task of that class to abolish, as the victorious culmination of its class struggle, the old relations of production and the superstructure based upon them. The freeing of the pent-up forces of production and with it the realization of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" can result only from the decisive defeat of the moribund exploiting class and the socialist transformation of society. The proletariat, as the historic carrier of socialism, develops its revolutionary theory, that "most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 116.)

"[For] there are different kinds of social ideas and theories. There are old ideas and theories which have outlived their day and which

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serve the interests of the moribund forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they hamper the development, the progress of society. Then there are new and advanced ideas and theories which serve the interests of the advanced forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they facilitate the development, the progress of society; and their significance is the greater the more accurately they reflect the needs of development of the material life of society." *(Ibid.)*

Marxism, historical materialism, has nothing in common with "economic determinism," which attempts to explain all historical events in terms of a mechanistic, one-way determination of any event by specific factors. Historical materialism recognizes that the changes in the superstructure reciprocally affect the development of the mode of production.

"Life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. [But] . . . as soon as a need is satisfied . . . new needs are made . . . and this production of new needs is the first historical act." (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp. 16-17.)

Thus, even when man does not understand the social result of his acts, the application of consciousness in the effort to satisfy his needs has tremendous social effects, which in turn react upon and transform the economic structure—the forces of production necessary to satisfy these new needs and the relations of production demanded by these new forces.

Economic determinism completely neglects the interaction of the superstructure upon the mode of production. It is possessed of the—

". . . fixed idea that historical analysis consists in reducing the rich pattern and colors of social development to a uniform grey monotone of human greed, unprincipledness and lust for power, an undifferentiated mass of depravity from which the intelligent student finally turned in revulsion to an all-embracing skepticism or nihilism." (Earl Browder, "Concerning American Revolutionary Traditions, *The Communist*, December, 1938.)

Such a theory is a distortion of the true, scientific analysis of society which alone can serve as a guide to historically progressive action. It leads to such interpretations of American history as that in which Beard, for example, has failed to understand the significance of the continuation of the American Revolution in the years between 1783 and 1812. Beard bases his analysis of the Constitution upon the wealth and the vested interests of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention alone, failing to see the reflection within that Convention itself of the class struggle then taking place, in which the Constitution represented a temporary compromise and a basis for future struggle.

Engels long ago answered those who attempted to confuse this type of theory with historical materialism:

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"According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc.—forms of law—and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the combatants: political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements, in which, amid all the endless *host* of accidents (*i.e.*, of things and events whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible to prove that we regard it as absent and can neglect it), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary." (Engels to J. Bloch; *The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 475.)

And again, when he attacked:

". . . the fatuous notion of the ideologists that because we deny an independent historical development to the various ideological spheres which play a part in history we also deny them any effect upon history. The basis of this is the common undialectical conception of cause and effect as rigidly opposite poles, the total disregarding of interaction; these gentlemen often almost deliberately forget that once a historical element has been brought into the world by other elements, ultimately by economic facts, it also reacts in its turn and may react on its environment and even on its own causes." (Engels to Mehring, *Ibid.*, p. 512.)

As the forces of production develop which for the first time make possible real control by men over nature and the establishment of a society free from exploitation and from classes; as the proletariat comes forward on the stage of history—the class which can conquer power, not to exploit in a new way, but to wipe exploitation forever from the face of the earth, there arises, for the first time—reflecting these colossal new forces of production—a science of society, the proletarian world outlook of scientific communism, which enables the working class, at the head of all the toilers, to lead in the socialist transformation of society.

Thus Marx says: "With this social system [capitalism], therefore, the pre-history of human society comes to a close."

It is the glorious role of the working class to usher mankind into that realm of freedom where "action become transparent to the understanding."

It is the role of the Party of the working class, the Communist Party, armed with the weapon of Marxism-Leninism, to imbue and weld together the working class movement with the scientific socialist teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin

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and Stalin, the indispensable guide and weapon for the realization of the proletariat's historic task.

That theoretical understanding is the guarantee of victory for the working class. But it must be won and rewon daily in struggle. The conflict for victory by the proletariat demands the most militant, determined and uncompromising struggle against bourgeois ideology, however it may show itself.

Our science is:

". . . a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension an affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time, also, the recognition of a negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary." (Karl Marx, *Capital,* Vol. I, p. 30.)

The bourgeoisie fights against our science with the desperation of a class dogged by inevitable defeat.

The class struggle of the proletariat calls for a relentlessly waged ideological struggle. In leading this struggle, it is our Communist task to guide the masses in utilizing the great arsenal of Marxist-Leninist literature, particularly the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*—the historic account of the course of the Party of Lenin and Stalin in leading the people of a sixth of the earth to make socialism a living reality.

"The theories of Marx will triumph, because the theories of Marx are true," declared Lenin.

Let us arm the masses with the truth that will triumph.

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A BRILLIANT MANUAL OF BOLSHEVIK TACTICS

(On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder)

BY F. FUERNBERG

TWENTY years ago Lenin wrote his *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder.* This small book* of about a hundred pages is not only one of Lenin's works which have been most widely read in the West; it has also exercised a direct and decisive influence upon the working class movement in the West. A militant pamphlet, written in the thick of the struggle and for the struggle, it contains at the same time a profound exposition of the strategy and tactics of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin himself provided his book with the subtitle: "A popular essay in Marxian strategy and tactics." Drawing upon the experience of Bolshevism, and citing the practical examples of the struggle of the proletariat in the most important European countries, Lenin summed up in this pamphlet the most essential precepts of Marxian strategy and tactics in the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.

At that time the Bolshevik Party, Lenin and Stalin, had already drawn up "an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat." (Stalin.) This became possible and necessary when capitalism had entered its last stage and the proletariat had begun to prepare for its historic role of emancipator of humanity from exploitation and class rule.

". . . In the . . . period of direct action by the proletariat," Stalin wrote, "in the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate practice; when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions; when all forms of struggle and of organization, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics), had assumed definite shape—only in this period could a complete strategy and detailed tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be elaborated. It was precisely in that period that Lenin dragged into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not rest content with restoring certain tac-

* See V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 57-158, International Publishers, New York.

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tical thesis of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and new theses correlating them all in a system of rules and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is to Be Done?; Two Tactics; Imperialism; State and Revolution; The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky; "Left-Wing" Communism,* etc., will doubtless be treasured as priceless contributions to the general store of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal." (J. V. Stalin, *Leninism,* Vol. I, p. 73, International Publishers, New York.)

The immediate motive that prompted Lenin to write *"Left-Wing" Communism* was the struggles and discussions that were going on in the revolutionary working class movement in the West where Communist Parties were forming at that time. Thus, the pamphlet gives a profound insight into the most vital strategical and tactical problems of the labor movement in the West at the time. But that is only part of its contents. It also contains a concise exposition of the international significance of the great October Revolution, a brief review of the development and the struggles of Bolshevism in Russia, and sets forth the strategy and tactics of Bolshevism in general.

Lenin's pamphlet was written during the Civil War and the fight against the forces of foreign intervention, when, following the defeat of Kolchak and Denikin, the Polish gentry, instigated and supported by the British and French imperialists, were preparing to attack the Soviet Union. By that time the proletariat had suffered a number of defeats on the international arena (the overthrow of the Bavarian and Hungarian Soviet republics). But the revolutionary wave was still surging high. The proletariat and the large masses of the people generally in Central and Western Europe were openly showing their discontent with existing conditions—those conditions that had led to the imperialist war, to crises, suffering, privation and misery. They were looking for a way out, they wanted to bring about a change in the social relationships, they wanted socialism. It was during that period, in the process of the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and their lackeys, the traitorous leaders of Social-Democracy, that Communist Parties emerged in the various countries.

The Communist Parties arose in the various countries of Europe in various ways—depending on the differences in the general development of the individual countries and the historic background of the working class movement in each country. There were, however, many features in the history of the rise of the Communist Parties that were common to all the countries; many of the problems of the struggle for the creation of Communist Parties were the same, and could not but be the same, for they concerned a truly international proletarian movement. All the newly formed Communist Parties were faced with the problem of assimilating the Leninist strategy and tactics and of applying the experiences

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and teachings of Bolshevism to the conditions prevailing in the West.

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In the beginning of his pamphlet Lenin posed the question:

"In what sense can we speak of the international significance of the Russian Revolution? [And his answer was] that the Russian model reveals to *all* countries something that is very essential in their near and inevitable future. . . . Herein lies the international 'significance' (in the narrow sense of the word) of the Soviet power, as well as of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics." (Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," *Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 57-58.)

At the same time Lenin pointed out:

"Of course, it would be a very great mistake to exaggerate this truth and to apply it to more than some of the fundamental features of our revolution." (*Ibid.,* p. 57.)

These points made by Lenin were of exceptional importance; for already at that time—and more often later on—two tendencies appeared which, though using different means, tried to achieve the same end: to set at naught the sympathy which Bolshevism had won among the broad masses in the capitalist countries, to prevent the masses from taking the only road that would lead them to their emancipation—the Bolshevik road.

One tendency declared that Bolshevism was "an oriental phenomenon suitable only for Russia" and tried to oppose to it "a Western system of revolutionary Marxism." The advocates of the other tendency demanded an exact, mechanical repetition—down to the minutest detail—of everything the Bolshevik Party had ever done in Russia; they wanted something that was outside time and space, and were plainly dissatisfied when the experience and teachings of Bolshevism were applied in a way that corresponded to the new situation and the different background of historical development. The representatives of both tendencies developed very quickly into open enemies of Bolshevism; for the more the Communist Parties applied the principles of Bolshevism, the more were these people forced to throw off their masks and show their real counter-revolutionary face.

The Russian Revolution showed the nations of the West not only a model of their own future, but also the way out of the imperialist war and of the crises and sufferings that followed in the wake of the imperialist war. Lenin was, therefore, fully justified in pointing out, in his book *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky.*

". . . that Bolshevism has indicated the right road of escape from the horrors of the war and imperialism, that *Bolshevism can serve as a model of tactics for all.*" (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 183.)

And, indeed, have not the two decades that have elapsed since the first imperialist war proved conclusively that only the road of Bolshevism is the road of escape from

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the horrors of war and imperialism? Where are today those who declaimed about "eternal peace"? Where are the admirers of the League of Nations, the humbugs of "disarmament," and the heralds of a "peaceful transition to socialism"? Their fine phrases have long been forgotten, and they themselves are now in the front ranks of the warmongers. Only the road of Bolshevism has proved to be the right road, the one answering to the interests of the peoples.

Bolshevism has remained true to itself and to its principles. Just as in that period, under Lenin's leadership, it showed the right road of escape from the horrors of the war and imperialism, so it has later, under the leadership of Comrade Stalin, carried on a persistent struggle against a new imperialist war and is now the most powerful and most active force in the world working for peace. The independent and consistent peace policy of the socialist state is a model for the working people of all the world to follow, strengthening and inspiring them in their fight against the imperialist war, in their fight for peace. This policy serves as a guiding line for the international revolutionary working class; for the "model of tactics" has become the uniform international tactic of the Communist International which is headed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the party of victorious socialism.

In order to understand and properly apply the model of tactics, the uniform international tactic of the Communist International under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, one must know how Bolshevik strategy and tactics arose, how they developed and triumphed. That is why Lenin devoted the first part of his *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* to a description of the development of Bolshevism. He emphasized one of the main conditions that insured the success of the Bolsheviks, namely, *iron discipline in the Party* coupled with:

"The fullest and unreserved support rendered it by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all the thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements in it who are capable of leading or of attracting the backward strata." (p. 60.)

But such really iron discipline cannot be enforced by rules alone, or by resolutions. Neither has such discipline anything in common with the blind obedience enforced in bourgeois armies; for it is the direct opposite of the latter. How has it been possible for the Bolshevik Party to establish such iron discipline? How is it maintained, controlled and strengthened?

Firstly, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, by its spirit of self-sacrifice and its stamina. Always, even in the most dangerous and difficult situations, the Bolsheviks took the lead boldly and courageously, undaunted by even the heaviest blows.

The Communists of the West have learned from them. In tens of thousands they endure imprisonment for their convictions, suffer torture and go to their death, but they never falter or waver; for they

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are imbued with the Communist consciousness, they are worthy and capable of being the vanguard of the working class.

Secondly, by their connection with the laboring masses, the proletarian as well as the non-proletarian. Nothing could sever the ties of the Bolsheviks with the laboring masses, for the Bolsheviks know that it is in these ties that their strength lies.

"It may be taken as a rule," Comrade Stalin said, "that so long as Bolsheviks keep contacts with the broad masses of the people, they will be invincible." (J. V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism,* p. 59, Workers Library Publishers, New York.)

The Communists in the capitalist countries are learning ever more to maintain such close connection with the masses. This is testified to by the response which their struggle against the imperialist war and for peace is finding among the masses.

Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership. It would be absurd to think that these conditions, which form the foundation of Bolshevik discipline, can be fulfilled at a stroke, in no time at all. It took long years of work, bitter experience and hard struggle to attain these conditions.

"Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline necessary for the victory of the proletariat." (V. I. Lenin, " 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," *Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 61.)

On the other hand, the history of the labor movement in the West explains why this discipline was lacking in the young Communist Parties in 1919-20 and some time after. The twenty years of struggle that have elapsed since then have strengthened and steeled the Communist Parties in the West, and today the Bolshevik discipline and the single will of these Parties prevails ever more against all the influences of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.

The history of the Bolshevik Party, the principal stages of which are dealt with in Lenin's pamphlet, gives the working class of the West a graphic picture of the struggle that must be waged in order o achieve victory. Lenin shows how Bolshevism developed, grew strong and became steeled in the struggle against opportunism and petty-bourgeois Leftism.

The Communist Parties of the West have fought many a hard battle against opportunism and Social-Democracy, against petty-bourgeois Leftism and counter-revolutionary Trotskyism. They have developed and grown strong in these battles. But big battles will still have to be fought by them before these two enemies of the proletariat and of the people as a whole are finally destroyed.

In the twenty years that have elapsed since the publication of Lenin's pamphlet thousands upon thousands of revolutionary workers have studied the teachings of Bolshevism, acquiring step by step a mastery of Bolshevik strategy and tactics. In this they have been

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helped by the works of Stalin, the great continuer of Lenin's great cause, works which are indispensable for a study of Bolshevism. A particularly great role was played in this respect by Stalin's brilliant *Foundations of Leninism.* It armed the Communists in their struggle against the hirelings of capital, against the social-traitors and the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites.

Recently the revolutionary workers of the West and the whole of progressive humanity have received another Leninist work—the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* brought out under the direction and with the active participation of Comrade Stalin. This book, which in a short time has literally carried the world as if by storm, has undoubtedly already exerted a tremendous influence upon the development of the Communist Parties, has stimulated the Communist consciousness of the revolutionary workers and has helped them to find their bearings in difficult situations. And in the future, too, this book is destined to play an important part in the struggle for the assimilation and application of the Bolshevik theory and tactics by the Communist Parties. The mass circulation of this book and the response it has evoked in the progressive sections of the working class and of the people as a whole are an expression and striking evidence of the theoretical and practical progress made by the Communist movement in the past twenty years.

With the brief exposition of Bolshevism as his basis, Lenin proceeded in his pamphlet to deal directly with the problems that agitated the revolutionary working class movement, particularly in Germany, England and Italy, at the time.

The masses of the working class were eager for socialism. The revolutionary workers were aroused and indignant over the enormous treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders who joined hands with the armed forces of reaction in order to suppress the working class. The harmfulness and corruption of opportunism were already clear to the most advanced section of the working class, for it had found out through its own experience what the fruits of opportunism really were. The attempts of the Centrists to conciliate the revolutionary workers with opportunism had failed. But the other enemies of the proletarian movement, those who tried to divert the revolutionary working class movement from its correct road by mouthing "Left" phrases, had not yet been exposed. They played on the hatred of the masses toward the Social-Democratic leaders, in order to discredit the proletarian party altogether and, primarily, to fight against the iron discipline in the party of the proletariat. They made use of the disgust of the revolutionary workers with bourgeois parliamentarism and their discontent with the reactionary trade union leaders, in order to preach the boycott of bourgeois parliaments and withdrawal from the reformist trade unions, thereby trying to isolate the revolutionary vanguard of the working class from the masses.

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All these super-radical "leaders," who had come up on the crest of the rising revolutionary wave, later turned out to be counter-revolutionaries. At that time they roared: "No compromise!" in order to conceal the fact that they were ready to sell themselves body and soul to the bourgeoisie. The attempts to create a "theory Left of Bolshevism" ended as they were bound to end: in the exposure of the exponents of this "theory" as bought agents of the counter-revolution.

But at that time these "theories" had some currency in the working class movement of the West. Lenin smashed these "theories," and Lenin's pamphlet on the infantile disorder in Communism had the decisive effect of depriving them of any foothold in the revolutionary working class movement. This pamphlet opened the eyes of thousands of honest but confused workers, and helped them to distinguish between what was really Left and what was parading in a "Left" cloak in order the better to promote the interests of the enemy. In his fight against these pseudo-Left "theories," Lenin set forth the revolutionary practice of the Bolsheviks and acquainted the workers of the West with the experience the Bolshevik Party had accumulated in the seventeen years from 1903 to 1920. Lenin showed how the Bolsheviks had made use of the tribune of the bourgeois parliament in order to further their extra-parliamentary struggle, how they had worked in the trade unions and even in reactionary organizations in order to influence the masses and win them over, how they had combined legal methods of struggle with illegal methods, and how they had entered into necessary compromises when the latter helped them to advance along their revolutionary road. Lenin showed:

". . . that in order to fulfil its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or sides of social activity without exception." (*Ibid.*, p. 139.)

The task of the revolutionary, class-conscious workers is, not to withdraw or keep aloof from the masses, but always to work among the masses. But, of course, one must be active not just for the sake of getting into parliament or being a member of a trade union, or a sports society, or a cooperative society!

". . . in *all* fields of activity, Communism *must introduce* (and without long, persistent and stubborn effort *it will be unable* to introduce) something new in principle that will represent a radical break with the traditions of the Second International." (*Ibid.*, p. 154.)

Thus, twenty years ago, Lenin set the Communists in the West the task of creating a party of a new type, a party modeled after the Bolshevik Party, a Leninist Party.

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When we read Lenin's pamphlet today, twenty years later, we see what great progress and success the Communist Parties and the world-wide Communist movement have achieved. But at the same time we also see that Lenin's precepts are

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just as correct today as they were then and that they are still a sure guide in the struggle and activities of the Communist movement.

The Communists have introduced into their work much that is new, that constitutes "a radical departure from the traditions of the Second International." Take, for instance, the question of work in parliament. The necessity of utilizing the tribune of parliament for the purpose of enlightening the masses is now unhesitatingly recognized and understood by all Communists. At the same time the Communist Parties are following Lenin's precept, his demand that:

> "The Communists in Western Europe and America must learn to create a new, unusual, non-opportunist, non-careerist parliamentarism." (*Ibid.*, p. 141.)

Have the Communists in Western Europe followed this precept of Lenin's? Unquestionably they have. The parliamentarism of the French, Belgian, Swedish and other Communist Parties differs radically from bourgeois and Social-Democratic parliamentarism. The Communist parliamentarians are incorruptible representatives of the interests of the working class and the whole people. In spite of every kind of persecution, they proclaim from the parliamentary tribune the views and slogans of the revolutionary working class.

The bold and fearless conduct of the Communist deputies in the French Parliament and in court, the fight they put up against the imperialist war and against the exploitation and persecution of the working class is fully in line with the tradition of the great revolutionary demonstrations of the Bolshevik deputies in the Russian Duma and of Karl Liebknecht. These French deputies expressed the will and the longings of the people; they are Communists who are applying the Bolshevik experience to the revolutionary struggle in their own country. Compared with this manifestation of the new, Communist parliamentarism, of what consequence are the handful of traitors and cowards who deserted to the camp of the enemy the moment the situation became acute? The working class is well rid of this scum, and from their treachery it draws the conclusion that it must be even more vigilantly on its guard against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences, and that it must place in responsible positions only fighters who have been tested in the revolutionary struggle.

Today, in 1940, the struggle of the proletariat is more complicated and in many respects more difficult than twenty years ago. Capitalism, which has run its historic course, is fighting tenaciously and ferociously, tooth and nail, with cunning and treachery, against the rising class. The titanic conflict between capital and labor has become truly international. The former isolation of some countries is now a thing of the past. The class conflicts in one country—the big and many small, seemingly insignificant, events—have their repercussions in other countries. At the same time the entire struggle of the working class

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in all countries is influenced and determined by the contradiction between socialism which has achieved victory on one-sixth of the globe and capitalism which has survived in the rest of the world.

Marx and Engels said in the *Communist Manifesto* that:

"In the national struggle of the proletarians of the different countries, they [the Communists] point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality [and that] . . . they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 219.)

The international strategy and tactics, which the working class can no longer dispense with if it really wants to carry on the struggle against capitalism, consists precisely in the recognition of "the interests of the movement as a whole," namely, of the fact that the main direction of the struggle is determined by the power of socialism, by its strengthening and consolidation, by the socialist Soviet Union. Only such movements and struggles as lie in this direction are really revolutionary and progressive. At the same time the revolutionary workers, the Communists, have learned in the past twenty years to proceed in their struggle from the peculiarities and special conditions of each individual country. The task is:

". . . to learn to apply the general and main principles of Communism to the *peculiar* relations between classes and parties, to the *peculiar features* of the objective development toward Communism which are characteristic of each country and which must be studied, found, divined." (Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism," *Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 131-32.)

The Communists do not proceed from an abstract theory, but from the actual evolution of human society. This evolution has been different in the various countries. By reason of their peculiar historic and economic conditions, one country arrived at capitalism earlier, the other later. Under capitalism itself the development of the various countries proceeds unevenly. This gives rise to peculiarities, which must be taken into account if the common goal, socialism, is really to be achieved. Necessarily progress will be different in a country with capitalism a hundred years old and in a country with a comparatively young capitalism. There must be differences between a country in which the peasantry constitutes a minority (such as England), a country in which the peasantry is firmly rooted (such as France), and countries in which the peasantry constitutes an overwhelming majority (such as the Balkan countries). The forms of the proletarian struggle in countries of traditional bourgeois democracy, where the bourgeoisie came to power by revolutionary means, will be different from those in countries where bourgeois democracy has never been able to gain a hold over the masses of the people, and where the bourgeoisie assumed power by more or less

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peaceful means. The working class will have to use different means in the fight where national independence is unchallenged, and where it is menaced; the fight will have to be different where the bourgeoisie is oppressing other nations, and where the whole people live under conditions of national dependence or oppression. All these peculiarities affect the struggle of the proletariat and must be considered in determining its strategy and tactics in each country, which in their turn are subordinate to the common goal, the international strategy and tactics of Communism.

"To investigate, study, seek out, divine, grasp that which is peculiarly national, specifically national in the *concrete manner* in which each country *approaches* the fulfilment of the single international task, the victory over opportunism and 'Left' doctrinairism within the working class movement—this is the main task of the historical period through which all the advanced countries (and not only the advanced countries) are now passing." (*Ibid.*, p. 135.)

More than that! The Communists must grasp "the peculiarities of classes and parties and their relationships." For within each country the progress of society is not uniform. There are a variety of classes and social strata between the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and the reactionary bourgeoisie. In the working class itself there is the whole gamut between advanced, class-conscious workers and the backward workers, those who are still under the spell of reaction. The peasantry, the urban middle class, the working intellectuals—all have their social and ideological peculiarities, their historical traditions, which may retard or promote the revolutionary struggle. The art of leading the people is to discern and develop those aspects of the various peculiarities that are progressive, that are in line with the interests of the proletariat and, consequently, with the interests of historic progress; and to fight those aspects that are reactionary. The Bolshevik rule that it is essential to "keep contact with the broad masses of the people" would be meaningless if the Communists failed to grasp these distinctions and peculiarities and reckon with them.

Our enemies are doing everything to prevent the Communists from following Lenin's precepts in their work. They are pouring abuse on us because we strive to base our work on the realities of life and on the aspirations of the masses. They are trying to induce us either to see only the peculiarities, to submerge the revolutionary movement in them and to lose sight of our great goal, of our single international task—that is, to sink into opportunism—or else to ignore these peculiarities, to become a sect detached from life, to sink into petty-bourgeois Leftism. The Communist Parties, following the example of the Bolsheviks, have been waging a struggle on two fronts—against the Right and the "Left" deviations. It is in this struggle that they are acquiring the ability to lead the masses of the people.

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Today, in the period of the second imperialist war, the Communists are leading the struggle for the achievement of the common international aim, for the

". . . immediate termination of the predatory, unjust, imperialist war, [for] peace among the peoples, and bread, rights and freedom for the toilers." ("Twenty-two Years of Soviet Power—Manifesto of the Communist International on the twenty-second anniversary of the October Revolution," *The Communist International*, No. 12, 1939, p. 1091.)

And in this struggle the Communists are proceeding from the particular and specific conditions of each country, from the part which each individual country is playing in the imperialist war and in the conflict between the capitalist world and the world of socialism.

The English and French Communists are exposing the lies of the British and French imperialists about this being a "war for democracy," for the "independence of small nations." They are fighting for the complete and unrestricted right of self-determination for the peoples that are oppressed by British and French imperialism; they are fighting against the heavy burdens of the war which are being shifted onto the shoulders of the working people, against the regime of terror and the attacks upon the working class movement.

The American Communists are fighting against the hypocritical policy of the bourgeoisie which, while parading under the cloak of neutrality, is fanning the flames of war and is preparing to draw the United States into the war.

The German Communists are fighting for the strengthening of the friendship between the Soviet Union and Germany, for securing this friendship by the freedom of the German people, and by freedom and the right of self-determination for the Czech, Slovak, Polish and Austrian peoples.

All the Communists are supporting the peace policy of the Soviet Union, fighting against the anti-Soviet designs to draw the Soviet Union into the imperialist war.

In this struggle all the Communists are proceeding from the development and traditions of their peoples. The French Communists will not lose sight of the needs of the small proprietors in the countryside, nor will the English Communists ignore the powerful cooperative movement with its strong roots among the masses. Likewise, the French Communists will not be prevailed upon to ignore the important role of the middle classes in their country, just as the German Communists will not forget that Social-Democratism still has deep roots in Germany, and the British Communists will not neglect the wide possibilities for a rapid development of a powerful peace movement in their country.

Under the present conditions, the titanic work which the Communists are carrying on and must carry on among the masses could not be performed properly if the Communists were to forget another experience of the Bolsheviks and if they were to fail to apply the rule that it is

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obligatory to combine legal and illegal means of struggle. (*"Left-Wing" Communism,* p. 102.)

In most countries the Communist Parties are today illegal. But Communists do not capitulate when the bourgeoisie suppresses and bans the Party. The Communist Party which has been banned lives on illegally, works and fights illegally. But neither can a strong illegal Party be welded, nor can it exercise any influence upon the masses, if the Communists fail to combine illegal with legal work. The illegal Communist Party and its members must avail themselves of *every* legal opportunity to work among the masses, to fight the bourgeois and Social-Democratic influences and to rally the working people to the struggle for their interests. Such legal opportunities exist always and everywhere, even though in varying degrees. The Communists do not neglect even the slightest of such opportunities. Whether as defendants in court when they stand trial, or as rank-and-file members of their trade unions, or even as members of singing societies or chess clubs—everywhere the Communists must work in the spirit of their Party, fighting everywhere against the imperialist war and its effects, for the international solidarity of the proletariat, and for the bulwark of the working people—the Soviet Union. It is obligatory for the Communists to work wherever the masses are to be found.

"You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently, precisely in those institutions, societies and associations —even the most reactionary—in which the proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found." *(Ibid.)*

That is the earmark of the genuine revolutionary.

". . . Revolutionaries who are unable to combine illegal forms of struggle with *every* form of legal struggle are poor revolutionaries indeed." *(Ibid.,* p. 140.)

Lenin, however, pointed out yet another aspect of the importance of combining legal with illegal work.

"In many countries, including the most advanced," he wrote, "the bourgeoisie is undoubtedly now sending, and will continue to send, agents-provocateurs into the Communist Parties. One method of combating this peril is the skillful coordination of legal with illegal work." (*Ibid.,* p. 86.)

When he has to carry out Party assignments in the sphere of legal work, the agent-provocateur and spy must sooner or later become exposed, because there comes a moment when the Party assignment clashes with the assignments of his masters in the police. At the same time his work is proceeding under the keen and direct control of the masses of the workers who are thus in a position to bring about his exposure all the sooner. On the other hand, the Communists must, of course, not lose sight of the fact that the legal forms of struggle may enable the spy to worm his way into the illegal Party.

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By a proper combination of illegal and legal forms of work the Communists enable the masses the more easily to learn from their own experience. At the same time this enables the Communists to learn from the masses and to rectify quickly whatever mistakes there may occur. Lenin and Stalin have always emphasized that it is the duty of the Communists not only to teach and train the masses and to raise them to a higher level, but also to learn from the masses. They must learn from the masses to improve their work and rectify their mistakes. The Communists do not claim to be "superhuman" and people who never make mistakes. They set themselves the aim of avoiding "serious mistakes" and of speedily correcting the mistakes they have committed. The Communists correct their mistakes openly, before the whole working class; they reveal the causes of their mistakes and draw the necessary lessons from them. Only thus is it possible for the revolutionary working class party actually to overcome the mistakes it commits in the course of its activity and growth. Only the Communist Party possesses the inner strength to admit and discuss its mistakes openly. It thereby shows that it is really fighting for the interests of its class and of the broad masses of the people.

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and of how it fulfils *in practice* its obligations toward its *class* and toward the toiling *masses*. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyze the conditions which gave rise to it, and to study attentively the means of correcting it—these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the *class*, and then the *masses*." (*Ibid.*, p. 98.)

This self-criticism, far from weakening, actually strengthens the Communist Parties. The Communist Parties of the West are learning more and more to practice this Bolshevik self-criticism. Immediately after the outbreak of the second imperialist war the Communist Party of Great Britain committed certain errors. But it did not shrink from admitting these mistakes before the working class; it analyzed them publicly and corrected them. The Communist Party of Great Britain has thereby gained in strength and cohesion, and has been able to carry on all the more effectively its struggle against the imperialist war and for peace. It was precisely this self-criticism that frustrated the attempts of the enemies to turn the mistakes of the Communists to their advantage.

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In all the capitalist countries the Communist Parties are at present engaged in a hard struggle. The bourgeoisie, which has become imperialistic and parasitic, and whose rule is growing ever more corrupt and ever more brutal, is casting about in desperation for ways and means of maintaining its exploitation and oppression of the peoples. Today, when socialism has been

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successfully built up in the Soviet Union, and when the imperialist world rule is in the throes of a profound crisis, we recognized more than ever the penetrating insight of Lenin's words written in 1920:

"After the proletarian revolution in Russia and the international victories of this revolution, which the bourgeoisie and the philistines did not expect, the whole world has changed, and everywhere the bourgeoisie has also changed. It is terrified by 'Bolshevism,' it is enraged against it almost to madness, and precisely for that reason, it, on the one hand, is accelerating the progress of events and, on the other, it is concentrating attention on the suppression of Bolshevism by force, and by that it is weakening its position in a number of other fields. The Communists in all advanced countries should take both these circumstances into consideration in their tactics." (*Ibid.*, p. 143.)

The Communist Parties and the Communist International are mindful of these circumstances. They are developing the struggle for the reserves of the proletariat—the middle classes—and utilizing the rivalries among the imperialists, at the same time applying the tactical lessons of Bolshevism. They are carrying on the struggle against the treacherous leaders of the Socialist Parties who have merged with the bourgeoisie, and against all the rotten elements who have wormed their way into the ranks of the workers and are trying to drag the revolutionary working class into the mire of opportunism and "defense of the fatherland." They are carrying on the struggle against petty-bourgeois Leftism, against the counter-revolutionary Trotskyite agents of the bourgeoisie who are trying to disrupt the working class.

The Communists are marching firmly and resolutely along the revolutionary road of the proletarian class struggle, while "the cleverest members of the bourgoisie have become [muddled] and . . . cannot help committing irreparable stupidities." (*Ibid.*) The members of the bourgeoisie are committing these stupidities, because they represent a class that is in its decline. The working class, the Communists, who are guided by Marxism-Leninism, will see to it, through their practical work and the mobilization of the masses for the revolutionary struggle, that these stupidities of the bourgeoisie remain irreparable indeed.

"The imperialists of the warring countries have begun the war for a new partition of the earth, for world domination, dooming millions of people to destruction. The working class is called upon to put an end to the war after its own fashion, in its own interests, in the interests of the whole of laboring mankind and thereby to destroy once and for all the fundamental causes giving rise to imperialist wars!" (Georgi Dimitroff, *The War and the Working Class in the Capitalist Countries*, p. 23, Workers Library Publishers, New York.)

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BOOK REVIEWS

AMERICA SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN, by Bruce Minton and John Stuart. International Publishers, New York, 454 pages, $2.50.

THE difficulty of bringing dialectics to bear upon current events in mass understanding is the too frequent lack of memory's relation of present with past events. Therefore the value in obtaining, within the covers of one book, a Marxist history of the United States from World War years down to date.

No one person can recall all the multitude of things which, taken together, as they are presented in *The Fat Years and the Lean* by Bruce Minton and John Stuart, bring out as on a movie screen the rounded perspective of the crowded years in such manner as depict the "whence and whither" of American capitalism in this year of 1940.

Perhaps it were better to give the authors' own statement of what their book is, before delving deeper into its details. Their foreword says, in part:

"The attempt in this book has been to gauge the predominant economic and political trends in the United States since the end of the first World War. We make no claim of recording the inexhaustible body of evidence which in our estimation proves that capitalism, as it emerged after 1919, was moribund. The political patterns of this declining economic system in turn influenced the course of American economic life. And it is with the broadest strokes that we have pictured the people's struggles against monopoly and hunger, and for a freer and more abundant life—of the conscious and unconscious drive toward socialism."

Although the authors disclaim the giving of detail, this reviewer must testify that in the 429 pages of the text, which is exclusive of complete index and exhaustive bibliography, he has found such an astounding mass of detail, yet so condensed and inter-related by illuminative interpretation as to earn acclaim as to clarity and comprehensiveness combined.

Here are traced and correctly correlated the major and even many minor economic and political developments of over twenty years of recent United States history. Yet these are set against a background, continuously followed throughout, of the changing international situation.

Here are the actions of contending classes, taking place on the industrial and parliamentary fields; of the political parties in and out of

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office, including the parties of the working class and the embryonic development of the farmer-labor movement. Here the seemingly lagging but historically swift development of the trade union movement from one officially swathed and bound by class collaboration to the determined class action of the C.I.O.

Here emerges the relation which militant organized labor, and the Communist Party, freed from the hobbles of opportunist leadership in 1929, bears to the growing attraction of the small farmers, petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals for unity with the working class against monopoly capitalism.

Here, in short, is the rich, overwhelming proof in the history of the past two decades that the present policy of the Communist Party of the United States is the correct weapon for the American working class in the struggle against imperialism, hunger and war in this year of 1940.

* * *

One might stop with that. But it would not do justice to a book whose value goes beyond mere mention. Take, for instance, the closing chapter, "In the Shadow of War," wherein are followed the vacillations during and since 1936 of—

". . . the friendly squire from the Hudson Valley [who] had certain leanings toward the democratic way, toward preserving capitalism without resorting to the last desperate weapon of fascist dictatorship."

Why did Roosevelt, the "middle-of-the-road" reformer, become almost militant in his attacks on the "economic royalists" in the 1936 election campaign? What were the reasons that, after swinging now right, now left, he—and his "New Deal"—"took a road analogous to that traveled twenty years before by the 'New Freedom,' the progressive movement sponsored by President Roosevelt's political mentor, Woodrow Wilson"?

To those who, remembering the Roosevelt that supported the Wagner Act (but failing to remember that the Wagner Act originated with union labor rather than with Roosevelt), "cannot see" him as at present an enemy of organized labor, the last chapter of this book is required reading. The whole story is there.

"The President could make good his fine words only by leaning heavily on the popular support he could rally among workers, farmers and the middle classes, once he began to turn his promises into reality. . . . Too obviously capitalism was not functioning 'normally'; it demanded ever more frequent shots in the arm just to keep going. . . . The monopolists expressed impatience. So did the people. . . . Wall Street's enmity to the New Deal grew more shrill, more virulent. . . .

"Considering the lamentations against it, the Administration program appeared remarkably restrained. The farmers had been granted no greater benefits than those contained in the first A.A.A. and formerly approved by monopoly. Labor had received only what it had been strong enough to win.

"[But] from the moment monopoly entered into a definite offensive against the New Deal and

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against all concessions won through organization and struggle, the class character of the attack became clear, and every battle only brought the issues into more precise focus. President Roosevelt was the leader of the united opposition against 'the economic royalists,' as he called them . . . 'the resolute enemy within our gates ever ready to beat down our words unless in greater courage we will fight for them.' "

It is important to understand that, although the masses smelled the smoke of class struggle:

"Neither candidate [Landon or Roosevelt] challenged the profit system. Roosevelt believed in capitalism as strongly as his bitterest critics. The nub of disagreement centered in the question of how to preserve it, whether by forcible dictatorship of monopoly that meant fascism, or by holding on to democratic forms, acknowledging certain abuses and alleviating them. . . . The composition of the two camps nevertheless bespoke the tense character of the conflict."

Those who today see the vital and growing role of Labor's Non-Partisan League must remember its fledgeling days in 1936. Also that "Labor had been pivotal in amassing Roosevelt's votes—the fruits of intensive organization from 1933 onward." But they must also remember that Roosevelt's "ostentatious indifference" to the savagery with which capital fought the advancing C.I.O. was rooted in "an innate distrust of workers" whenever they showed signs of moving toward securing greater influence in the affairs of the nation.

It was this that led him to lend support to the bosses of "Little Steel" when they first locked out the workers and then murderously attacked their picket lines. It was then that the forked tongue of bourgeois reformism uttered the signal of class opposition: "A plague on both your houses." And the President was silent when the capitalists massacred the steel workers of Chicago on Memorial Day in 1937.

It was in this period, also, that the shameless betrayal of democratic Spain was a sharp reminder to any idol-worshippers who forgot that in this historic period any bourgeois leader, whether a "friendly squire from Hudson Valley" or not, who sets out to "preserve capitalism," is sure to have "certain leanings" toward fascism as his basic line, with well-advertised "leanings toward the democratic way" for window dressing.

Indeed, this collaboration with the "appeasers" of fascism continued beyond Spain and did not drop a stitch even when the betrayal of Munich horrified the world. In all essentials, aside from a few empty words, the great "defender of democracy" in the White House supported the Munichmen Chamberlain and Daladier—and for the same reason, a desire to destroy the land of socialism. And with the outbreak of war American imperialism's spokesman became frantic with its central desire to organize the imperialist world against the U.S.S.R. A fact, by the way, that Minton and Stuart have failed to make sufficiently emphatic, in my opinion.

As with union labor and with

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Spain's beseiged democracy, so also with the unemployed. The Roosevelt who challenged the "economic royalists" in November at Madison Square Garden with "I welcome their hatred . . . we have only just begun to fight," by his second inaugural had presented a budget which encouraged relief cuts—"in violation of the election mandate"—and later went into full retreat before monopoly pressure in 1937, as the authors point out, "By cutting relief, Roosevelt imperiled what recovery there had been since 1934."

In brief, what sent Roosevelt, who set out to preserve capitalism, to the Right, was a long process to which the fear of a revolutionary outcome of the war was only a climax, a process of growing conviction "that resistance to war, to monopoly and its imperialist policies was also a struggle against the profit system." His "national unity" with Wall Street and abandonment of New Deal reforms were but a logical consequence.

* * *

This sketchy and inadequate resumé of the book's last chapter, snatching some of the authors' phrases from that chapter's seventy-two pages, is but a faint illustration of the scope of this book which acquires more than ordinary value during this election year.

Every one of the first five chapters is as necessary as that last one. The first one, "The Armistice Begins," reminds us that, with the end of the first World War and the beginning of the truce, now again broken—

"America had changed. And the prospect of the morrow induced a deep nostalgia, a desire to recapture the past that in the deceptive haze of recollection appeared so alluring. Men felt themselves the victims of a shabby hoax. The struggle to preserve the democracy of the world had brought, not liberty, but the vengeful Treaty of Versailles. President Wilson had crassly violated his oaths of fealty to the people; his assurances of a just peace had proved as illusory as the New Freedom."

American imperialism did not feel cheated; for it had changed from a debtor to a creditor nation, and began its long course of reliance upon the weapon of capital and rationalized productive capacity for the conquest of "backward" and poorer nations. It boasted sanctimoniously that this was a bloodless way to build an empire, and even congealed this pretended distaste of "the use of force" in the Kellogg Pact which it thrust under the noses of its less "moral" rivals in a way both to gain for itself the approbation of the world and put the League of Nations, the private property of Anglo-French imperialism, on the spot.

That was okay for the American imperialism of the first post-war decade. For it yet held the appearance, compared to its rivals, of health and growth. For American monopoly capitalism, the 'twenties were a giddy whirl of "prosperity." The Social-Democrats of the whole world, especially those of Europe who had betrayed the discontented and aroused masses in the post-War

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revolutionary upheaval and tricked them back into submission to capitalism, clamorously acclaimed America and "organized capitalism" as the true path to a better life, in scornful rebuke of those who urged the Lenin road to socialism. In 1929 Bukharin still saw American imperialism as "young and red-cheeked," and Lovestone invented a whole theory of "American exceptionalism" and exemption from world imperialist decline and decadance.

Yet, as *The Fat Years and the Lean* shows, the general crisis of capitalism was gnawing at American imperialism's vitals already in 1920. Visibly, that is, in the agrarian crisis, which throughout the book is dealt with in generous detail and correctly related to the general crisis.

In one minor respect, the general excellence with which the farm question is handled, this reviewer feels, is marred, and an erroneous impression is left, by the inference of a dominant and permanent trend of dispersion of the agricultural population from the land to the city as a settled result of the agrarian crisis. This is an overestimation, yet the trend is important, as is also the tracing of its cause.

The fact, as given on pages 146-47, of the growth of large area and mechanized farms, does not precisely justify saying: "As a result, the agricultural population dispersed from land to city. . . . Sharecroppers were crowded off their holdings, tenants were displaced," etc. While proper as a generalization, this should be modified.

For it was rather the relative "prosperity" of city industry as compared to farm poverty of the early twenties that attracted farm population cityward, than the propulsion of mechanization. When the crisis struck industry also, we saw a growth in the number of farms from 6,288,648 in 1930 to 6,812,350 in 1935. Yet mechanization of farming undoubtedly grew, too. As also the area in large-scale farms, if not their absolute number. What the authors correctly note (page 64)—that "to spread mechanization was impractical on the basis of small individual holdings," should be added to the fact of an absolute increase in the number of farms, to extract the final conclusion of the *impoverishment* of the farm population rather than its dispersion to cities. This fact is of high political importance.

But, in a brief review of such a monumental work as the authors of *The Fat Years and the Lean* may take pride in, this reviewer does not wish to overemphasize such relatively minor flaws. The problem is to do it justice, and to illustrate its value as a history of the past two decades to those making the history of the next two decades. And there is no space for doing that adequately.

Above all we recommend the tracing through the last years of Wilson and the administrations of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover; the irrepressible strivings of the toiling masses for independent political organization and action, and how this trend is now maturing.

There are invaluable lessons to

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be learned from the obstacles it has met and the petty-bourgeois mistreatment it has suffered, from the Conference for Progressive Political Action in 1920, and the LaFollette movement in 1924, to the more encouraging emergence of its outline today, when militant union labor is assuming its proper role as leader. LaFollette refused to crystallize a party, yet he got 5,000,000 votes. Of that, Minton and Stuart say:

"If LaFollette had accepted the nomination from an independent political party, as the Workers (Communist) Party had suggested, if he had built an organization and had called for the unity of the working class instead of red-baiting, his vote might well have been more impressive and it would have formed the basis of a full-fledged political party in future elections."

In a period when both the Republican and Democratic Parties are again indistinguishable as parties of capitalism, reaction, hunger and war, this lesson of what even such a caricature of independent political action as LaFollette represented could do in attracting the masses is a cheering one for those working with better material and in more favorable general circumstances. As the authors conclude their history of post-war America:

"The history of the years to come would inevitably be marked by a growing realization that the final test of those who desired progress rested in the ability of the majority to win full economic, cultural and political freedom. The aspiration for a better life, for liberty and security was the true expression of the American Dream that capitalism had perverted and debased."

Minton and Stuart have given us a book that aids that realization and inspires that aspiration.

HARRISON GEORGE

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